

RESOLUTION # 16

LIVESTOCK PROCESSING INDUSTRY IN NEW JERSEY

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 industry
4 support sales; and

5 **WHEREAS**, recent years have seen wide market swings, combined with periodic
6 spikes in input costs, and a lack of processing facilities that enable producers to establish
7 Custom Value-Added products, 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 regional 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 livestock
22 meat and meat products within the state can provide the state's livestock farmers with a
23 chance to control their own destiny and earn significant premiums over the commodity
24 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,
27 such as when the farmer controls the packaging and sale of the products that his farm
28 produces; and

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

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

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

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

48 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 107th State
49 Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City on February 9-10, 2022, do hereby
50 strongly urge the New Jersey Department of Agriculture to do the following:

- 51 • Continue to support value-added projects, both on-farm and those that involve
52 processing at off-farm sites, that can offer New Jersey livestock meat producing farmers
53 significant premiums for their products.
- 54 • Continue to work with all appropriate state and local governments and agencies, as well
55 as the livestock meat industry, to seek funding for on-farm, or stand-alone small
56 processing centers or regional processing plants and/or equipment toward that end, with
57 a focus on reaching a broader market in New Jersey and surrounding states.
- 58 • Help livestock farmers access all appropriate state and federal government agencies
59 with the goal of maximizing all small-business funding program opportunities in order to
60 create value-added livestock meat processing units that will support and grow the
61 diversified livestock industry in New Jersey.
- 62 • Help livestock farmers expand beyond custom retail cuts to include less-expensive,
63 alternative table-ready livestock meat, to serve non-premium markets.
- 64 • Work through the Department's Division of Marketing and Development to provide
65 enhanced support for establishing a viable "*Jersey Raised*" livestock meat/protein
66 products brand.
- 67 • Enthusiastically support development of a processing facility that would be owned by a
68 group of livestock producers and facilitate the development of individual branding of
69 custom products and enhance the ability to develop a wholesale market that would
70 establish greater volumes of meat product which can be made available to a wider
71 consumer base.

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

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