

RESOLUTION # 18

ANIMAL HEALTH AND VETERINARY CARE

1 **WHEREAS**, preventing animal diseases from entering New Jersey’s livestock
2 populations, and responding to disease outbreaks when they do occur, is a primary mission
3 of both the Department and its Division of Animal Health (DAH); and

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

7 **WHEREAS**, the DAH must continually prepare to prevent diseases from entering the
8 state, not only via animals that may be imported to New Jersey but also through wildlife that
9 cannot be controlled for testing; for example, working with USDA and fellow state agencies
10 during 2022 to respond to instances of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) that arrived
11 in several backyard flocks via wild birds (mainly black vultures) and which, on the larger-
12 outbreak scale, resulted in the euthanasia of millions of birds throughout the nation; and

13 **WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 pandemic brought into sharp focus the issue of how
14 “zoonotic” diseases in animals can jump to infect humans under certain circumstances,
15 adding an element of concern for people who work or live around large numbers of animals
16 that they might personally come into contact with; and

17 **WHEREAS**, a strong first line of defense in helping DAH prevent and fight animal
18 diseases in New Jersey livestock is a robust large-animal veterinary corps regularly serving
19 the animals owned by livestock operators; and

20 **WHEREAS**, there is a need for large-animal, livestock, and food-animal veterinarians
21 in New Jersey, shown through surveys done by the NJAES Board of Managers livestock
22 committee; and there is a need for more of these doctors to serve operations in New Jersey
23 for improved animal care; and

24 **WHEREAS**, reports of shortages of such doctors are actually a critically worsening
25 statewide problem where some livestock owners report transporting an animal several hours
26 into another state in order to be seen by a veterinarian; and

27 **WHEREAS**, the Rowan University School of Veterinary Medicine, the first such
28 program in New Jersey, and the 34th veterinary school in the nation, will open in New Jersey
29 with the first class being accepted in 2025; and

30 **WHEREAS**, State budget resources directed toward subsidizing or reimbursing
31 tuition for students at the new Rowan University school or at other veterinary schools outside
32 New Jersey, could be used to incentivize young veterinarians locating and staying in New
33 Jersey for a given number of years, bolstering the number of large-animal and livestock vets
34 in the state; and

35 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 108th State
36 Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 8-9, 2023, do
37 hereby support legislation for veterinary medicine loan-redemption programs, as well as a
38 matching grant program provided through legislation for veterinary students, primarily from
39 New Jersey and bordering states who practice livestock medicine in this state for a minimum
40 of five years after graduation.

41 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge access to online publications and videos,
42 as well as in-person educational seminars, be provided to 4-H members and small livestock
43 owners by NJAES and the NJDA about pertinent information in the areas of nutrition,
44 disease, and parasite prevention, and made available to producers as well as feed stores
45 and fairs, places frequented by small farmers who raise livestock.

46 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge NJDA and Rutgers to work collaboratively
47 to create a contact list for all small backyard operations and all livestock farms, to be used for
48 notification of emergencies, dissemination of educational information, and upcoming
49 workshop sessions.

50 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NJDA and NJAES, and the Rutgers Board of
51 Managers, agricultural education groups, veterinarians and producers from the involved
52 livestock commodity groups come together on at least an annual basis in a working group to
53 create a relationship to move forward in assisting the Department of Agriculture and NJAES
54 in assessing the needs of the producers in regard to education, services, and veterinarian
55 care.