**RESOLUTION # 7**

**NEW JERSEY FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES EDUCATION**

**WHEREAS**, the 44 secondary instructional programs related to agriculture are

known as New Jersey Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Education and include

experiential learning (Supervised Agricultural Experiences) and leadership development

through FFA, the appropriate career and technical student organization for these

programs; and

**WHEREAS**, today’s high-tech Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Education

curricula, taught by 62 agriculture-certified instructors, is infused with rigorous academics

and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) components provided by

Curriculum in Agricultural Science Education (CASE) and other agricultural science

education courses, to ensure global competitiveness, student achievement and well

prepared graduates for over 250 career areas in the food, agriculture, renewable energy and

environmental industries; and

**WHEREAS**, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture’s Office of Food, Agriculture

and Natural Resources Education conducts the national State Teach Agriculture Results

 (STAR) program to develop strategies to address teacher recruitment, retention, and the high demand for agriculture teachers; and

**WHEREAS**, a bill signed into law in May established “Agriculture Literacy Week” in New Jersey, to be administered by the Department, to further boost students’ knowledge of the health benefits of agriculture and the career opportunities that can be pursued once a student has a good grounding in agricultural science; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition, New Jersey Farm Bureau administers the “Ag in the Classroom” national program in New Jersey, and these two programs taken together can be high-profile vehicles by which the Department enhances the public’s understanding of, and appreciation for, agriculture; and

**WHEREAS**, that program also is spearheading the delivery of New Jersey’s first-in-the-nation climate change curriculum for schools, with a focus on how changing climate can have agricultural implications; and

**WHEREAS,** an increased supply of teachers will be needed to fill vacancies caused

by retirements and/or to provide newly established programs with properly trained and

certified teachers for Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Education, thereby helping to

increase the human capital needed to serve the agriculture industry; and

**WHEREAS,** farm viability is a major concern within New Jersey; and

**WHEREAS**, Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Education has had a long history of preparing young adults for agriculture and related careers, and many New Jersey FFA members have taken leadership positions in the agricultural community; and

**WHEREAS**, more programs are needed to provide an increased supply of human

capital required to fill the annual employment opportunities in Food, Agriculture, Renewable

Energy and the Environment; and

**WHEREAS,** education programs need to be developed and offered in regular accessible frequency to prepare new, beginner and even experienced farmers to provide support services locally for farmers to possess business management principles and market agricultural products -retail and wholesale, domestically and internationally; and

**WHEREAS,** pragmatic education programs such as agricultural power systems, equipment and tractor repair, planting and harvesting equipment, cutting equipment, and systems education for silos; irrigation; dairy; feeding/ processing as well as hiring and retaining labor education should be enhanced and developed at our community college and vocational school settings throughout the state of New Jersey; and

**WHEREAS**, Public Law 115-224 “Strengthening Career and Technical Education for

the 21st Century Act,” also known as Perkins V, requires data-driven decision-making and a

 “local” needs assessment indicating labor market needs to support existing and future Food,

Agriculture and Natural Resources Education programs; and

**WHEREAS**, neither the state Department of Agriculture, the Department of Labor,

nor the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station has comprehensive data for the state’s

need of high-skill, high-wage occupations in the Food, Agriculture or Natural Resources

sector; and

**WHEREAS**, Perkins V also identifies industry-valued credentials as a qualifier for a

rigorous program of study and as a measure of readiness for college and the 21st century

world of work; and

**WHEREAS**, the food, agriculture, renewable energy and environmental industry

sector lacks industry-valued credentials, especially credentials appropriate for secondary

aged students.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 109th State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 7-8, 2024, support the development of new agriculture programs in parts of the state where human capital is most needed to serve the broad agriculture industry and recommend the Department collaborate with the New Jersey Department of Education to secure funds to be used by Rutgers NJAES to conduct a needs assessment for high-skill, high-wage Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources occupations to help support existing and future established Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Education programs.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Education be included as part of the solution to farm viability.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that we support the creation of statewide industry-valued credentials for secondary-aged students in cooperation with industry trade

organizations.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we support and further encourage the recent

efforts made by the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences (SEBS) to improve and

market the five-year agricultural science education program that currently exists; the

development of the agricultural education option in the undergraduate major in Agriculture

and Food Systems, including the development of the courses focusing specifically on

agricultural education; efforts made by SEBS to utilize the Curriculum for Agricultural

Science Education to recruit high-quality undergraduates interested in agriculture careers;

and the development of the post-bachelor’s program at the Rutgers Graduate School of

Education (GSE), developed and offered jointly with the Rutgers School of Environmental

and Biological Sciences, leading to the degree of Ed.M. in Agricultural Science Education.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we support continuing a strong and viable Food,

Agriculture and Natural Resources Education program in New Jersey through a continuing

memorandum of understanding between the New Jersey Department of Education and the

New Jersey Department of Agriculture; support continual improvement of resources and

services to all New Jersey instructional programs for food, agriculture and natural resources

education at the middle, secondary, and post-secondary levels; support the development of

innovative academically/STEM-enhanced agriculture instructional programs, and support the

increase in supply of teachers.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that it is recommended that the community colleges and vo-tech schools work in additional coordination with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, New Jersey Farm Bureau, and the many non-profit farming organizations who have expertise and presently now offer workshops and conferences in classroom and in field, to concurrently request state dedicated funding from our legislature for their community colleges, poly-techs, and vocational schools to establish tuition reductions and fees to accelerate immediate participation in two-year career agriculture education.