**RESOLUTION # 2**

**PFAS AND AGRICULTURE**

**WHEREAS**, researchers recently have focused much attention on the presence in the environment of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), a large group of non-natural, synthetic chemicals that have been found widespread in the environment, in people, wildlife, and fish all over the world; and

**WHEREAS**, PFAS are known in shorthand as “forever chemicals,” as they tend to stay in people’s bodies a long time and do not break down easily in the environment; and

**WHEREAS,** PFAS are in the blood of most people in the world, and can get there by:

* Drinking water from PFAS-contaminated municipal or private well sources;
* Eating foods produced near places where PFAS were used or made;
* Eating fish caught from PFAS-contaminated waters;
* Eating food packaged in materials that contain PFAS;
* Breathing in or swallowing PFAS-contaminated soil or dust;
* Swallowing or breathing in residue or dust from products containing PFAS, like some carpeting and water-repellent clothing; and

**WHEREAS**, federal and state environmental agencies are beginning to sound the alarm about PFAS and are hammering out details of how to address the issue, including deciding what levels of PFAS would be considered acceptable in the environment and whether, or to what extent, farms should be tested for PFAS in the environment as the producers of the products that could, if grown in PFAS-contaminated soil or irrigated with PFAS-contaminated water, contribute to PFAS getting into consumers’ blood; and

**WHEREAS**, differences in approaches by federal and state agencies already have underscored the difficulty in reaching consensus on this very new issue – for instance, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) set a drinking water threshold level of 14 parts per trillion, while the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) set the drinking water threshold level at 4 parts per trillion; and

**WHEREAS,** these differences also include whether farm properties should have soil, water and livestock tested, and, if they exceed the limits ultimately set by governmental officials, what to do about compensating a farm property for the loss as well as making the farm property safe for future agricultural use; and

 **WHEREAS**, a farm property may also be at risk if they are feeding livestock from sources that have PFAS contaminated feed/silage; and

 **WHEREAS**, even if a farm property is not directly tested, it could be “looped into” an investigation into PFAS contamination on nearby properties, some of which are former industrial sites, that may have migrated onto the farm property through groundwater movement or dust particles blown onto the soil at the farm property; and

**WHEREAS**, legislators at all levels of government have yet to tackle the crucial issue of how massive PFAS cleanups will be funded, with one notable exception being the State of Maine, whose legislators have earmarked $60 million in the state budget for PFAS investigations, remediation and producer financial support if a producer must cease operations temporarily to clean up the PFAS.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 110th State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 5-6, 2025, do hereby request that the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) and State Board of Agriculture continue working with the NJDEP and EPA to address PFAS related issues on agricultural lands.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Departments to investigate the current distribution of PFAS in different systems/transit pathways (soil, drinking/irrigation/surface waters, materials, etc.) followed by development of clear evidence of the risks posed by specific pathways to human, livestock, plants, etc.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that we urge the Departments to establish a response to PFAS (regulatory or otherwise) that is in accordance with science-based risk assessment appropriate to the context (e.g., research on crops’ uptake of different PFAS chemicals in soil and research on the transit of these chemicals to livestock and their products).

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Legislature to establish resources for NJDA to conduct testing for PFAS.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Legislature to establish a PFAS funding pool of $60 million to provide financial support to assist farms with technical assistance and to maintain agricultural viability should testing result in a significant financial loss to the farm.