**RESOLUTION # 44**

**WINERIES, BREWERIES, CIDERIES, MEADERIES AND DISTILLERIES**

**WHEREAS**, wines from New Jersey’s nearly 60 wineries are becoming increasingly sophisticated, and that sophistication is showing in their award-winning products; and

 **WHEREAS**, the state’s wine industry has received countless awards locally, nationally and internationally, and New Jersey’s approximately $30 million dollar per year wine industry adds an important diversification to New Jersey’s agricultural sector, offering agri-tourism opportunities while providing a value-added product; and

 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey’s wine industry ranks in the Top 10 in the nation in production and, although grape production continues to expand in New Jersey, it is not keeping pace with increased wine production; and

 **WHEREAS,** the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) administers a promotion and research fund for the wine and grape industry supported by per gallon assessments collected by the New Jersey Wine Industry Advisory Council, and the Council prints promotional materials, conducts publicity programs, funds promotional festivals and conducts varietal and production-oriented research with these funds; and

 **WHEREAS**, recent legislation passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor, designates each November as “New Jersey Wine Month, helping to even further promote the approximately 60 wineries in our state’s four viticulture areas, and

 **WHEREAS**, small-scale, on-farm breweries also are becoming more popular in New Jersey, and their operations, including the brewing of beer and the operation of pubs connected to the breweries, present opportunities for New Jersey farmers to sell products used both in the production of beer and as items on the menus of the pubs; and

 **WHEREAS**, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed into law in 2013 provisions for small craft breweries and distilleries licenses, provided that no less than 51 percent of the raw materials used in the production of those products are grown in the state; and

 **WHEREAS**, meaderies, cideries, and distilleries also are becoming popular features on farms, and they are also geared toward spotlighting as much farm output as they can in producing meads and ciders; and

 **WHEREAS**, like wineries, breweries, cideries, meaderies and distilleries, in order to navigate years in which the crops they grow to make their beverages have significant failures due to pests, disease, weather or other issues, should have some flexibility, in such cases of crop failure, as to the amounts of crops grown on their farms that are used in their value-added beverages; and

**WHEREAS**, legislation has been introduced to establish an Advisory Council for Breweries, Meaderies and Distilleries to help promote this growing sector of beverage production in New Jersey, and the State Board has submitted a letter to the Legislature indicating that, if concerns can be addressed about increasing the number of farmers required to be on this council, the State Board would support the legislation; and

 **WHEREAS,** questions have arisen in recent years about whether the disposal of even relatively small amounts of wastewater from micro-breweries and micro-distilleries, necessitates the need for the operator of such a facility to file a Nutrient Management Plan with the state and/or local officials; and

 **WHEREAS**, there currently exists no statute or regulation that specifically allows for one winery or farm brewery to share New Jersey-produced beverages with another farm licensed winery or brewery, if they have the appropriate licenses.

 **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 urge the NJDA to continue taking steps to help the wine and grape industry increase grape production in an effort to increase the local agricultural input of New Jersey’s wine industry; promote the use of locally produced fruits in the making of New Jersey wines; encourage support for new production research to increase the state’s grape production and expand the locally grown content of New Jersey wines.

 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we support attempts, in situations tied to crop failure, and/or a declared statewide health crisis or natural disaster, by New Jersey wineries, breweries, meaderies, cideries, and distilleries to seek temporary waivers to requirements in farm licenses for certain percentages of a farm’s output used in making their beverages to come from New Jersey, provided those percentages return to normal as soon as practicable, and provided the wineries, breweries, cideries, meaderies and distilleries do not exceed their highest year’s production when using farm products from other states.

 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we acknowledge and appreciate the Legislature and Governor designating the entire month of November as “New Jersey Wine Month,” further helping to promote wines made here to New Jersey residents and those beyond our borders who can purchase through “direct shipping” on the Internet.

 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the appropriate agencies to help facilitate the development of craft breweries and distilleries as called for in the legislation signed into law in 2013.

 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we support the State Board of Agriculture’s approach to the pending legislation to create an Advisory Council on Breweries, Meaderies and Distilleries to promote those sectors of agriculture, provided the questions about membership on that Council can be addressed to the Board’s satisfaction, as well as urging the Legislature to amend the measure to include cideries in that Council as well.

 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we support the proposed general permits developed by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, in consultation with agricultural leaders and health officials, to address the questions regarding nutrient management for on-farm breweries and distilleries.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that farm breweries and wineries that grow over 51 percent of the ingredients in their products on their farm shall be allowed to share New Jersey-produced beverages between other NJ wineries/ farm breweries/ farm distilleries/ farm cideries as long as they have the appropriate license, which will allow breweries to also serve wine and vice versa, helping to promote other farm operations and agritourism.