**RESOLUTION # 9**

**SUPPORTING *JERSEY FRESH***

**WHEREAS**, the *Jersey Fresh* grading and marketing program has served as a model for state-sponsored agricultural promotion efforts for more than four decades, since its inception in 1984; and

**WHEREAS,** the *Jersey Fresh* logo, and those of its spinoff brands (such as *Jersey* *Grown, Jersey Natives, Jersey Raised,* and *Jersey Seafood*) is a recognized marketing benefit to both farmers enrolled in the *Jersey Fresh* program and the retailers who use it to draw attention to the fact that they stock New Jersey agricultural products; and

**WHEREAS,** aquaculture refers to the “farming” of fish, mollusks, crustaceans and aquatic plants, and implies a farmer’s involvement in the rearing process such as seeding, stocking, feeding, and harvesting; and

**WHEREAS,** aquaculture is a growing industry not currently permitted to label products that are farmed in the state with the *Jersey Fresh* logo;and

**WHEREAS**, the further implementation of the federal Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) will result in more inspections on more produce farms, and a *Jersey Fresh* quality grading inspection can help farmers be better prepared for FSMA inspections; and

**WHEREAS**, the FY2025 State budget included a total appropriation for the *Jersey Fresh* and related marketing and promotional programs of $149,000, which included $49,000 directly for *Jersey Fresh* programs (which matches funding from federal sources for Specialty Crops promotion) and $100,000 for promotion of agricultural products not defined as “Specialty Crops” by the USDA (under which *Jersey Fresh*-promoted products are included by the federal agency); and

**WHEREAS**, the goal of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA), beyond increasing participation in the program, is to create a guidance document that will help answer farmers’ questions about the program and provide case studies of those farmers who have maximized their investment in *Jersey Fresh.*

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 1010th State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 5-6, 2025, do hereby urge the Legislature and Governor to increase the overall appropriation for Jersey Fresh and related promotional campaigns for New Jersey agricultural products to at least $750,000.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge all those in the agricultural community to support any bills that may be introduced in the current Legislative session to increase the State appropriation for *Jersey Fresh* in the FY2026 budget to $650,000 in State funding, and to contact their state Assembly members and Senators to urge them to also co-sponsor such bills.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that we urge the Legislature to amend legislation to include farm raised aquaculture products as an additional commodity eligible to use the *Jersey Fresh* logo.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we commend the work of the Aquaculture Advisory Committee to develop a quality-grading standard for aquacultured products, as the quality of products labeled under the *Jersey Fresh* program is a major factor in developing consumer confidence in those items.

 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the NJDA to continue to explore ways to generate increased funding for the Jersey Fresh programs, and additionally urge the subcommittee formed by the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture to continue exploring, and make recommendations to the Board, the further development of the Jersey Raised branding program for all livestock products, such as meat, wool, fiber, and hides produced in New Jersey so that those producers may also enjoy increased success in the marketing of New Jersey products.