

RESOLUTION # 32

HUNGER AND NUTRITION IN NEW JERSEY

1 **WHEREAS**, schools are an appropriate vehicle to promote the availability of
2 healthier foods and nutrition services, as they are uniquely positioned to model and
3 reinforce healthy eating behaviors, such as increasing knowledge of and improving
4 access to fruits and vegetables on the school campus and at school-related activities;
5 and

6 **WHEREAS**, schools can serve as an outreach tool to carry positive nutrition
7 messages to parents and the community at large; and

8 **WHEREAS**, schools are required to develop and implement a school
9 nutrition/wellness policy and to promote nutritious alternatives, and the Department
10 continues to train and encourage marketing nutritious foods to children and incorporating
11 more fresh fruits and vegetables into the school meal program; and

12 **WHEREAS**, the Department of Agriculture has significantly increased
13 participation in the School Breakfast Program by working in conjunction with the New
14 Jersey Department of Education to facilitate the inclusion of “breakfast after the bell”
15 options in schools; and

16 **WHEREAS**, the WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program, Senior Farmers’ Market
17 Nutrition Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants,
18 and Children are established through the United States Department of Agriculture but
19 have been administered in New Jersey through the New Jersey Department of Health
20 and Senior Services; and

21 **WHEREAS**, WIC coupon redemption rates in New Jersey have traditionally been
22 low compared to other states, and resistance has been met for the idea of “over-issuing”

23 WIC coupons in order to ensure the highest possible number of people are receiving
24 them, with the goal that they will also use them; and

25 **WHEREAS**, one medium-sized white potato has 45 percent of the daily value of
26 vitamin C, more potassium (620 mg) than equivalent servings of bananas, spinach, or
27 broccoli, and 10 percent of the daily value of vitamin B6; and

28 **WHEREAS**, a sound, balanced, nutritional diet is important to the well-being of
29 society, both in terms of the future productivity of our children and the health and well-
30 being of the population in general; and

31 **WHEREAS**, approximately 1.9 million people in New Jersey rely upon various
32 feeding and nutrition programs administered by or through the Department; and

33 **WHEREAS**, local purchases of food items including fresh fruits and vegetables
34 can benefit the local economy, growers and distributors, thus reducing the number of
35 “food miles” those commodities must travel to reach the end consumers; and

36 **WHEREAS**, timely information from state officials regarding the potential for sale
37 of locally grown and harvested foods through federal government programs such as
38 SNAP, WIC and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program would help farmers more
39 effectively plan for what types and amounts of produce they should grow in a coming
40 season; and

41 **WHEREAS**, volunteer gleaning organizations that provide surplus produce from
42 farms to community feeding operations are a valuable source of fresh agricultural
43 products that do not demand financial resources for purchasing this food, yet still have
44 costs related to storage and transportation of this produce; and

45 **WHEREAS**, the state and federal governments have identified the issue of “food
46 deserts” – areas where people lack significant access to fresh agricultural products due
47 to poverty, lack of viable transportation or scarcity of food retailers capable of providing
48 an adequate supply of such products – as an issue that deserves serious attention; and

49 **WHEREAS**, the Camden Children’s Garden continues to operate the Fresh
50 Mobile project launched as a pilot program in 2013 to bring fresh produce and other
51 agricultural products to residents of Camden, which has been designated by the USDA
52 as one of the most severe food deserts in the nation; and

53 **WHEREAS**, an additional way to bring more fresh produce and other agricultural
54 products to designated food deserts is through government initiatives to increase the
55 number of “cold boxes” in neighborhood corner stores and bodegas, provided those
56 boxes are used for the keeping and retailing of fresh agricultural products.

57 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 101st
58 State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 10-
59 11, 2016, do hereby continue to support the efforts of the Department and its partners in
60 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), as well as community feeding
61 organizations to ensure that healthy food choices and fresh fruits and vegetables are
62 available to all children and adults throughout New Jersey.

63 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Department to continue to lead
64 in promoting healthy foods and sound dietary choices to improve the well-being of New
65 Jersey's citizens by promoting programs such as “Eat Right, Move More,” “Jersey Fresh
66 Farm to School”, and the New Jersey School Nutrition/Wellness Policy.

67 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Department to continue
68 promoting the increased participation in School Breakfast programs, especially as
69 regards inclusion of “breakfast after the bell” options, which have helped New Jersey
70 significantly increase participation over the past several years.

71 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Governor and Legislature to
72 recognize the critical nature of maintaining state funding levels supporting the federal
73 school nutrition and commodity programs in an amount that will ensure that no
74 accompanying federal funds are lost.

75 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge those at all levels responsible for
76 purchasing or otherwise acquiring food for community feeding programs to ensure that
77 those foods are grown, harvested or produced in New Jersey to the greatest extent
78 practicable.

79 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge New Jersey state officials who
80 administer feeding and nutrition programs to provide the earliest possible notice to the
81 farm community in this state as to the expected demand for produce and other
82 agricultural products through those programs, providing farmers with a better planning
83 tool for the types and amounts of such products to be produced in a coming season.

84 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we stress the critical nature of the Governor
85 and Legislature providing adequate funding for the State Food Purchase Program
86 (SFPP) in the FY2017 budget at a level at least equal to the current funding, and that
87 additional funding should be provided for storage and distribution of emergency food.

88 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Department to work with New
89 Jersey fruit and vegetable processing companies and the Rutgers Food Innovation
90 Center to produce pre-packaged, value-added, single-serving New Jersey fruit and
91 vegetable products, and “Made With Jersey Fresh” products, for use in school food
92 service menus.

93 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Governor and Legislature to
94 continue including volunteer gleaning organizations among those who receive financial
95 support in their efforts to feed the hungry.

96 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we strongly support increased participation in
97 the following safety-net federal and state nutrition programs administered by the
98 Department: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program; After
99 School Snack Program; Special Milk Program; Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program;
100 Child and Adult Care Food Program; Summer Food Service Program; School

101 Commodity Program; The Emergency Food Assistance Program; the State Food
102 Purchase Program; WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, and we urge the
103 Department to work toward having white potatoes established as an eligible commodity
104 in the WIC, SNAP and other food-assistance programs in which they currently are not
105 eligible.

106 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we support educational, outreach and
107 marketing measures to increase the redemption rate of the WIC coupons issued in New
108 Jersey, so that more farmers can connect with more WIC consumers, for the benefit of
109 all.

110 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we support the Department's continued
111 participation in the state's multi-agency "Healthy Foods Initiative," which has been
112 convened to address the issue of food deserts by developing a more extensive supply of
113 locally grown and produced, fresh agricultural products into those areas where such
114 items are now difficult to obtain, and to expand the ways in which residents of those
115 areas can obtain those items.

116 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we support initiatives to increase the number
117 of "cold boxes" used to store fresh fruits, vegetables and other agricultural products
118 corner stores, bodegas and other food retailers in urban areas designated as "food
119 deserts," provided the cold boxes remain dedicated to that purpose.

120 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we encourage the continuation of the Fresh
121 Mobile project, operated by the Camden Children's Garden, which is designed to bring
122 fresh fruits, vegetables and other agricultural products to the residents of Camden.

123 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge enhanced support for the Rutgers
124 Institute for Food, Nutrition and Health and Rutgers Cooperative Extension to deliver
125 science-based educational programs in nutrition and healthy living.