

## RESOLUTION # 23

### FARMING ON PUBLIC LANDS

1           **WHEREAS**, throughout New Jersey, there exists publicly owned land that is  
2 actively farmed under lease agreements between farmers and governmental entities of  
3 the state, county or local level; and

4           **WHEREAS**, these lands remain a critical component of the available agricultural  
5 land base in the state; and

6           **WHEREAS**, farmers have expressed some concerns about the terms of these  
7 lease agreements; and

8           **WHEREAS**, these concerns include questions about certain restrictions or  
9 encumbrances imposed upon farmers that, in some instances, hinder agricultural  
10 production; and

11           **WHEREAS**, there has traditionally been no uniform, statewide model for renting  
12 these lands for agricultural purposes, increasing the risk of inconsistencies and  
13 individualized use restrictions in lease agreements that can impede or limit generally  
14 accepted farming practices; and

15           **WHEREAS**, in some instances, farmers make substantial investments in rented  
16 ground as a means of enhancing an individual parcel's agricultural productivity for the  
17 long-term, and thus are negatively impacted by exceedingly short-term lease  
18 arrangements; and

19           **WHEREAS**, recent discussions between farmer groups and senior staff at the  
20 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) have resulted in  
21 constructive movement toward more consistent and uniform lease language.

22           **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 102<sup>nd</sup>  
23 State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 8-9,

24 2017, do hereby urge the State Board of Agriculture and Department of Agriculture,  
25 along with the New Jersey Farm Bureau, to continue reviewing the current status of  
26 lease arrangements for agricultural purposes throughout the state to determine the  
27 potential for enhancing the predictability and consistency of land-leasing arrangements  
28 for agricultural purposes at the state, county and local level, where appropriate.

29 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** we urge that the State Board, Department and  
30 New Jersey Farm Bureau continue soliciting the input of county boards of agriculture  
31 and commodity organizations, and that the Natural Resource Conservation Service  
32 (NRCS) be consulted on lands leased for farming as part of this review process.

33 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that we acknowledge the recent movement within  
34 the NJDEP toward more consistent and uniform language on leases to farm public  
35 lands.