

RESOLUTION # 17

HUMANE TREATMENT OF LIVESTOCK

1 **WHEREAS**, the Department, working with industry representatives, New Jersey
2 Farm Bureau, veterinarians, Rutgers University, and the New Jersey Agricultural
3 Experiment Station, wrote and adopted N.J.A.C. 2:8, which became the first regulations
4 of their kind in the country to address the humane care and keeping of domestic
5 livestock; and

6 **WHEREAS**, the Department has adopted the regulation with amendments, as
7 prescribed by the New Jersey Supreme Court on July 30, 2008, following a challenge by
8 the New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, among others, in which
9 the Standards were largely upheld; and

10 **WHEREAS**, concerns from stakeholders about the inconsistent application of
11 animal cruelty statutes to the owners of livestock and poultry in New Jersey have not
12 changed since the adoption of the statute, despite the development of rules to guide the
13 investigation of complaints -- namely that state and county SPCAs enforce animal
14 cruelty statutes based on factors other than science-based regulations; and

15 **WHEREAS**, the Standards, as they currently exist, must be filed for re-adoption
16 by December 30, 2018, but also can be amended through the rule-making process
17 before then; and

18 **WHEREAS**, animal agriculture increasingly finds itself a point of contention with
19 the consuming public through the activism of those who either oppose animal agriculture
20 altogether or object to certain practices deemed to be consistent with N.J.A.C. 2:8, as
21 evidenced in recent attempts to legislatively prohibit the use of sow gestation crates in
22 New Jersey; and

23 **WHEREAS**, both of those attempts at legislation to prohibit gestation crates in
24 New Jersey were vetoed by the Governor, who cited in successive veto messages that
25 decisions regarding the humane treatment of livestock are most appropriately left to the
26 Department of Agriculture and to the State Board of Agriculture as the Department's
27 policy-making body, and New Jersey's farm community is in support of those vetoes.

28 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 100th
29 State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 4-5,
30 2015, urge that New Jersey's agricultural community, represented by the New Jersey
31 Farm Bureau, Rutgers University, the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, the
32 New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association, the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture
33 and Department of Agriculture reconvene to evaluate the implementation of N.J.A.C. 2:8,
34 Humane Treatment of Domestic Livestock.

35 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Department and the State Board
36 of Agriculture, in that evaluation, to consider all changes in scientific approaches brought
37 forward by the appropriate veterinary bodies, both state and national, in determining if
38 the Standards should be amended.

39 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we encourage the Legislature to adequately
40 fund the operations required for implementation and defense of N.J.A.C. 2:8, Humane
41 Treatment of Domestic Livestock.

42 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the New Jersey State Attorney
43 General to require that all law enforcement personnel authorized to respond to animal
44 cruelty complaints comply with N.J.A.C. 2:8 and enforce those standards upheld by the
45 Supreme Court, as well as ensuring that the notification requirements to the Department
46 of Agriculture are also upheld.

47 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we recognize the increased interest and
48 concern within the state and country about livestock handling and welfare and therefore

49 support the expansion of services provided by the Division of Animal Health in order to
50 maintain pace with the significant increase in requests for field investigations of alleged
51 violations.

52 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the we urge the NJSPCA to avail itself of
53 increased and more frequent training regarding the Humane Standards, which the
54 Division of Animal Health has made a commitment to provide, in an effort to have
55 NJSPCA enforcement more accurately reflect the provisions of the Standards.

56 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we support appropriate funding levels and
57 resources to provide science-based factual information to educate citizens of the state,
58 especially the agricultural community, and properly comply with the Legislature's
59 mandate that the Department continually review and update standards to ensure the
60 humane care of livestock and poultry.