

RESOLUTION # 14

NEW JERSEY AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

1 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey’s agricultural community is faced with a multitude of
2 challenges that threaten its viability and sustainability, including: Right to Farm conflicts;
3 taxation issues; wildlife damage; labor supply shortages; land use and environmental
4 regulation; rising production costs; and water-quality concerns; and

5 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey agriculture’s viability and sustainability are also
6 impacted by untapped market opportunities and limited access to innovations that would
7 enhance prosperity, stewardship potential and compatibility with other land uses; and

8 **WHEREAS**, given the economic impacts and public benefits of the agricultural
9 and food complex, not only in rural areas but also in the state’s urban and suburban
10 communities, the constraints on the industry impinge upon the assurance of food
11 security, nutrition and health, water quality and supply, environmental sustainability,
12 economic development, and the quality of life for all residents of the Garden State; and

13 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey’s status as the nation’s most densely populated state
14 means its environmental pressures exceed those of other states, and thus have raised
15 the environment to become a key quality-of-life issue; and

16 **WHEREAS**, this requires new policies and technologies that are effective in
17 maintaining the delicate balance between environmental quality and economic growth;
18 and

19 **WHEREAS**, the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES)
20 provides a diverse range of research, extension, and education programs that serve the
21 people and businesses of New Jersey and the urban, suburban, and rural communities
22 in which they live and work, and provides the expertise and information needed to

23 develop the policies and technologies that strike the balance between environmental
24 quality and economic growth; and

25 **WHEREAS**, the budget constraints faced by NJAES, including large budget cuts
26 or flat budgets over the last decade, and the need to continue meeting operational costs,
27 have meant that less funding is available for its personnel, research and outreach
28 programs; and

29 **WHEREAS**, exacerbating the funding cuts has been a threat that the federal
30 formula funding for state agricultural experiment stations could be replaced with
31 competitive grant funding only; and

32 **WHEREAS**, the circumstances detailed above have strained the ability of NJAES
33 to continue to provide its traditional high-level of service to all its stakeholder groups; and

34 **WHEREAS**, further continued decreases in funding will negatively impact the
35 delivery of crucial agricultural programs across the state; and

36 **WHEREAS**, constituents advocating for more funding for Rutgers/NJAES, such
37 as the NJAES Board of Managers, must feel comfortable that the additional funding they
38 seek will be expended in the most transparent manner possible; and

39 **WHEREAS**, the Board of Managers appreciates the inclusiveness with which
40 NJAES/School of Environmental and Biological Sciences has approached forming
41 search committees to fill vital faculty and staff positions over the past year; and

42 **WHEREAS**, economic realities of reduced budgets often mean agricultural
43 extension agents are taking on research responsibilities once held by specialists, as well
44 as teaching responsibilities, leaving less time for farm visits to keep abreast about what
45 is happening in the fields of New Jersey's production agriculture operators; and

46 **WHEREAS**, the state's agricultural community is concerned about further attrition
47 among agricultural agents and specialists, as many become eligible for retirement in the
48 next few years; and

49 **WHEREAS**, NJAES, unlike other facets of the university system, cannot make up
50 for lost budget dollars with tuition increases, as it does not receive tuition revenues.

51 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 100th
52 State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey on February 4-5,
53 2015, do hereby declare that support for production agriculture and NJAES must be
54 improved and maintained if solutions to the critical issues that production agriculture
55 faces are to be achieved, ensuring the viability of the state’s agricultural and food
56 system.

57 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we call upon the Executive Dean of the
58 School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the Executive Director of the New
59 Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES), in cooperation with its Board of
60 Managers, County Boards of Agriculture, the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture and
61 the Rutgers Cooperative Extension staff to continue their efforts to develop staffing and
62 program plans that will enable the continued delivery of quality programming to
63 production agriculture and all NJAES constituent groups and to develop new programs
64 as identified by stakeholders in agriculture and natural resources that catalyze economic
65 development in a sustainable manner.

66 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we call upon the Executive Dean of the
67 School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the Executive Director of the New
68 Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, the Board of Managers, County Boards of
69 Agriculture, the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture and Rutgers Cooperative
70 Extension staff to collectively improve the timeliness of communications among these
71 groups on key issues.

72 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we strongly urge the New Jersey State Board
73 of Agriculture, the NJAES Board of Managers and the New Jersey Farm Bureau to work
74 with the Governor, the Legislature and the county Boards of Chosen Freeholders to

75 restore adequate state funding for the NJAES and agricultural research, including core
76 funding to the Rutgers Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Upper Deerfield;
77 the Philip E. Marucci Center for Blueberry and Cranberry Research; the Snyder
78 Research and Extension Farm; The Rutgers Food Innovation Center; The Rutgers
79 Equine Science Center; The Fruit and Ornamental Research and Extension Center at
80 Cream Ridge; Adelpia Plant Science Research and Extension Center; The Rutgers
81 EcoComplex and the Aquaculture Innovation Center to compliment the extramural
82 grants, contracts and bequests secured by NJAES staff in the past fiscal years. In
83 addition, the agricultural community is strongly encouraged to support the initiative to
84 have the state legislators add \$1 million in program support funds for production
85 agriculture in the FY2016 state budget.

86 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the NJAES/SEBS leadership to
87 initiate search processes to replace retiring agricultural agents and specialists as soon
88 as a retirement is announced, thus reducing the amount of time it take to fill the retiree's
89 position, i.e., the recently vacated weed specialist position, which is extremely important
90 and needs to be addressed immediately.

91 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we also urge the USDA to provide a stable
92 source of funding for the Land Grant University and Extension programs.

93 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we encourage Rutgers' Department of
94 Family and Community Health Sciences to examine whether federal WIC funds are
95 performing up to optimal levels, since these funds have a direct benefit to New Jersey
96 farmers.