

RESOLUTION # 5

LIVESTOCK IN NEW JERSEY AGRICULTURE

1 **WHEREAS**, livestock has been a part of New Jersey agriculture from the state's
2 earliest days as a colony; and

3 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey's standing as the most densely populated state in the
4 nation means that livestock often are kept and raised in close proximity to residential
5 areas; and

6 **WHEREAS**, the value of, and income derived from, livestock in commercial
7 operations in New Jersey is economically significant, including (for 2015, according to
8 the National Agricultural Statistics Service): \$38.46 million in value of cattle and calves;
9 \$733,000 in income from hogs and pigs; \$22.4 million worth of milk produced (for 2012,
10 according to NASS, other categories reported \$2.6 million in value of sheep, goats and
11 wool; \$40.8 million in poultry and eggs, with a total livestock income of more than \$1
12 billion in the Garden State); and

13 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey also has traditionally seen keen interest in farmers and
14 other residents owning horses, both in the pleasure horse sector and those bred and
15 raised for horseracing, leading to the horse being the State Animal; and

16 **WHEREAS**, according to a 2007 study by the Rutgers Equine Science Center,
17 the horse industry contributes approximately \$1 billion annually to New Jersey's
18 economy; and

19 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey's livestock industry also helps sustain multiple
20 supporting economic factors, such as hay and grain producers, equipment dealers,
21 veterinarians, blacksmiths, fencing and construction, and others who work in the
22 livestock industry; and

23 **WHEREAS**, interest also is growing among New Jersey residents who desire to
24 keep small numbers of livestock – including chickens and other poultry, sheep, goats,
25 donkeys and others – to make fresh agricultural products, including eggs, milk and
26 cheese, wool, meat, hides, and others for themselves; and

27 **WHEREAS**, farms that might produce other crops or agricultural products as
28 their primary business also may have small numbers of livestock on their operations as
29 well; and

30 **WHEREAS**, all of these factors combine to make New Jersey livestock
31 operations both unique and more diverse when compared to livestock operations in
32 other states where there are more animals per operation and they are typically more
33 removed from residential areas; and

34 **WHEREAS**, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture’s Division of Animal
35 Health (DAH) is the primary agency charged in the state with ensuring the health of
36 livestock animals, since diseases in livestock can spread to other animals and, in some
37 cases, to humans; and

38 **WHEREAS**, a large part of that responsibility is ensuring that livestock coming
39 into New Jersey from other parts of the nation or the world does not also bring animal
40 diseases that could spread to animals already in the state; and

41 **WHEREAS**, the DAH must prepare to prevent diseases from entering the state
42 not only via animals that may be imported to New Jersey but also through wildlife that
43 cannot be controlled for testing; for example, the preparations the past three winters to
44 respond, if necessary, to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) that is transmitted by
45 wild waterfowl and has resulted in the euthanasia of millions of birds in the Midwest and
46 West, where those wild birds have passed HPAI into poultry operations, but has not, to
47 date, similarly impacted the East Coast; and

48 **WHEREAS**, the certified livestock inspectors within the DAH are, by law, the
49 experts for humane treatment of livestock when an allegation of cruelty or neglect is
50 made against an owner of livestock, as those inspectors have expertise that is not
51 common among humane-law enforcement officers, or others, who may mistake normal
52 husbandry, an ill animal or biosecurity measures for mistreatment of animals, as
53 humane-law enforcement officers and others may jeopardize a farmer’s livelihood or the
54 state’s livestock population when they do not follow appropriate testing and biosecurity
55 protocols; and

56 **WHEREAS**, it is vital that livestock farmers understand their rights, the role of the
57 DAH and how humane-law enforcement officers in a given location operate; and

58 **WHEREAS**, livestock owners and farmers should be aware that there is no
59 centralized oversight of those individuals tasked with enforcement of animal cruelty laws,
60 many of whom carry firearms, and believe that they always have the force of law behind
61 them, even if they should ignore provisions in the N.J.A.C. 2:8 (herein referred to as the
62 “Humane Standards”) which offer a safe harbor to livestock owners in New Jersey; and

63 **WHEREAS**, it is crucial for humane-law enforcement officers to understand the
64 vital role played by DAH’s certified livestock inspectors; and

65 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey’s commercial farmers have in recent years branched
66 out beyond “traditional” livestock (cattle, poultry, swine, small ruminants, etc.) and there
67 are now also New Jersey farmers raising llamas, alpacas, water buffalo, bison, rabbits,
68 emus, ostriches and other livestock, all of which can be a source of farm income and
69 contribute to the overall value of farm products sold in the state.

70 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 102nd
71 State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 8-9,
72 2017, do hereby urge the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, working alone or in

73 conjunction with other state and federal agencies, to continue fostering a livestock
74 industry that is a source of both pride and economic importance to the state.

75 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Legislature and the Governor to
76 provide additional and appropriate funding levels to the Department to allow the DAH to
77 continue providing expert advice to those tasked with humane-law enforcement and
78 livestock owners regarding the Humane Standards in cases where abuse and/or neglect
79 are alleged but which also require knowledge of animal husbandry, best management
80 practices, animal diseases, diagnostic testing and the practice of proper biosecurity
81 measures.

82 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we strongly urge the New Jersey humane-
83 law enforcement community to work closely with the DAH when assessing livestock so
84 that better and more consistent decisions concerning humane-law enforcement are
85 made, ensuring that appropriate animal husbandry, biosecurity and health
86 documentation are followed as part of every humane investigation.

87 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Department to establish a direct
88 line of communication with the livestock-raising community and livestock operators in
89 New Jersey, regardless of which type of animals they raise, and for livestock owners to
90 communicate amongst their groups as a whole sector, in a concerted effort to better
91 communicate their concerns to the DAH.

92 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we strongly urge the Department to join with
93 New Jersey Farm Bureau, Rutgers University and Cooperative Extension and other
94 agencies to provide assistance to livestock producers in the state, such as technical
95 advice, educational programs to enhance awareness of best management practices,
96 preventative medication, nutrition, waste management, humane standards compliance,
97 liability and marketing, including one or more livestock summits in the coming year
98 toward this goal.

99 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that all livestock products, such as meat, wool,
100 fiber, eggs and hides, will be eligible for recognition through the Jersey branding
101 programs.