

RESOLUTION # 19

RUTGERS NEW JERSEY AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

1 **WHEREAS**, the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) has been
2 generating and disseminating science-based knowledge and resources to New Jersey's
3 residents, communities, and businesses since 1880; and

4 **WHEREAS**, the federal Hatch Act (1887) and Smith-Lever Act (1914), respectively,
5 established federal funding for agricultural experiment stations at land-grant institutions
6 across the nation and Cooperative Extension in New Jersey and nationally; and

7 **WHEREAS**, the NJAES is a separate line item in the State of New Jersey's annual
8 budget; and

9 **WHEREAS**, NJAES has faculty and staff in campus-based departments, centers and
10 institutes at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences with disciplinary expertise
11 in agricultural, food and resource economics; animal sciences; biochemistry and
12 microbiology; ecology, evolution and natural resources; entomology; environmental sciences;
13 food science; human ecology; landscape architecture; marine and coastal sciences;
14 nutritional sciences; plant biology and pathology; and aquaculture; and

15 **WHEREAS**, NJAES maintains research farms, business incubator facilities, and
16 marine and coastal research stations across the state; and

17 **WHEREAS**, the NJAES strives to support the contemporary and emerging needs of
18 a diverse range of stakeholders in the state; catalyze economic development and innovation;
19 and, promote environmental integrity and sustainable resource management and land use;
20 and

21 **WHEREAS**, the NJAES supports the quality of life enjoyed by all New Jerseyans
22 through research and programs designed to increase the resiliency of our communities and
23 businesses; support for access to healthy local foods; and, promoting scientifically-based
24 recommendations for healthy eating and personal well-being; and

25 **WHEREAS**, the NJAES generates and extends university knowledge and science-
26 based educational programs through outreach programs to the public in diverse areas
27 encompassing agriculture; natural resources stewardship and the environment; food,
28 nutrition and health; fisheries, aquaculture, marine and coastal resources; home, lawn and
29 garden; and, youth and community development; and

30 **WHEREAS**, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, an integral part of NJAES, has faculty
31 and staff with expertise in agriculture and natural resource management; 4-H youth
32 development; and family and community health sciences in county offices across New
33 Jersey; and

34 **WHEREAS**, Rutgers Cooperative Extension’s statewide network of county offices
35 delivers educational outreach and programming to the citizens of New Jersey and provides
36 access to the resources and expertise of Rutgers University and the national Cooperative
37 Extension system; and

38 **WHEREAS**, State appropriations to NJAES have, in inflation-adjusted terms,
39 declined by 35 percent over the past decade; and

40 **WHEREAS**, NJAES, unlike other facets of the university system, cannot make up for
41 lost budget dollars with tuition increases, as it does not receive tuition revenues; and

42 **WHEREAS**, the erosion of stable state and federal capacity funding adversely
43 impacts the ability of the NJAES to cover rising operating costs and maintain and develop
44 the necessary long-term physical infrastructure, technology, and human capital needed to
45 support the existing and evolving needs of New Jersey residents, as well as their
46 communities and businesses; and

47 **WHEREAS**, the increased State budget appropriation to NJAES in FY19 reversed a
48 decade of declining or flat state support and facilitated the beginning of much-needed
49 investments in NJAES physical infrastructure; and

50 **WHEREAS**, in 2018 NJAES leveraged federal and state capacity funding to generate
51 external grants and contracts, gifts, and intellectual property revenues to support needed
52 programming; and

53 **WHEREAS**, the state’s agricultural industry has long relied on timely scientific
54 research and Extension programming delivered by NJAES to innovate and adapt to the
55 pressures and opportunities of operating in a densely urbanized environment; and

56 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey’s agricultural community is faced with a multitude of
57 challenges that threaten its viability and sustainability, including: evolving consumer
58 demands for local agricultural products; food safety; rapidly evolving technologies that affect
59 production efficiencies; new invasive pests; land use and environmental regulation; water-
60 quality concerns; rising labor and other production costs; wildlife damage; farmland
61 accessibility and cost; climate issues; globalizing market competition; Right to Farm conflicts;
62 and labor supply shortages; and

63 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey agriculture’s viability and sustainability also require access
64 to information and innovations that would enhance production efficiency and farm prosperity,
65 market access, sound land stewardship and resource management, and compatibility with
66 other land uses; and

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

72 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey’s status as the nation’s most densely populated state
73 means its environmental pressures, social issues, and community health concerns uniquely
74 distinguish it from other states, thus requiring that new economic growth policies and
75 technologies are effectively balanced with these considerations in order to improve the
76 quality of life of New Jersey residents; and

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

79 **WHEREAS**, the agricultural community is certain that further decreases in state
80 funding will negatively impact the NJAES' delivery of crucial agricultural and community-
81 engaged programs across the state, investment in, and dissemination of, new research and
82 technologies, and the maintenance of campus-based and off-campus research facilities; and

83 **WHEREAS**, the state's agricultural community already is experiencing the negative
84 ramifications of funding-related attrition in Extension agents and specialists who are vital for
85 the delivery of agricultural programming needed to maintain industry viability; and

86 **WHEREAS**, the state's agricultural community is deeply concerned about further
87 erosion in NJAES staffing in the face of looming retirements and growing need for both
88 traditional agricultural programming and innovation within the industry; and

89 **WHEREAS**, county salary contributions for county-based Rutgers Cooperative
90 Extension faculty and staff has, in aggregate, been rising, which reflects local recognition of
91 the importance of NJAES research and Extension programming; and

92 **WHEREAS**, stakeholder input into NJAES research and Extension programming is
93 vitally important and allows for an exchange of ideas about industry needs and potential
94 funding; and

95 **WHEREAS**, we recognize and support the continued efforts of the Executive Dean of
96 the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the Executive Director of the New
97 Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, in cooperation with its Board of Managers, County
98 Boards of Agriculture, the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture, New Jersey Farm Bureau,
99 agricultural commodity groups and Rutgers Cooperative Extension staff to develop the
100 necessary strategies to support the continued delivery of quality programming in production
101 agriculture and diverse areas affecting the quality of life for all NJAES constituent groups.

102 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 104th State
103 Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey on February 6-7, 2019, do

104 hereby declare that support for production agriculture and NJAES must be improved and
105 maintained at higher levels if solutions to the critical issues that production agriculture faces
106 are to be achieved, ensuring the viability of the state's agricultural and food system.

107 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we strongly urge the New Jersey State Board of
108 Agriculture, the NJAES Board of Managers, County Boards of Agriculture and the New
109 Jersey Farm Bureau to work with the Governor, the Legislature, and the County Boards of
110 Chosen Freeholders to provide adequate and stable state funding for the NJAES and
111 agricultural research and extension.

112 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge all County Boards of Agriculture and
113 commodity organizations and New Jersey Farm Bureau to support the Rutgers NJAES
114 Board of Managers' "Discovering New Jersey's Agricultural Experiment Station" campaign,
115 which includes education information and on-site visits to NJAES facilities for state legislators
116 and county freeholders so that they can learn of the impacts to the large and diverse
117 constituencies of New Jersey residents served by NJAES.

118 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we call upon the Executive Dean of the School of
119 Environmental and Biological Sciences and the Executive Director of the New Jersey
120 Agricultural Experiment Station, the NJAES Board of Managers, New Jersey Farm Bureau,
121 County Boards of Agriculture, the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture and Rutgers
122 Cooperative Extension staff to maintain timely communications on key issues, including
123 through stakeholder meetings and other meetings/forms of communication.

124 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we also urge agricultural and other stakeholders
125 to communicate with federal Congressional representatives, through NJAES representatives
126 to the Council for Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching (CARET) and all other
127 appropriate agencies and officials, the continued need for stable USDA funding for the
128 research and extension missions of NJAES that have proven their many-fold return on
129 investment for more than a century.