

RESOLUTION # 27

FARM BILL PRIORITIES

1 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey agriculture is diverse, spanning nearly a dozen major
2 sectors, and depends upon the vitality of a variety of agricultural products and enterprises to
3 make the overall industry a success; and

4 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey farms' proximity to population centers brings with it unique
5 challenges not faced in those states where significantly lower population densities make it
6 less likely that farmers will confront noise, odor and other complaints from neighboring
7 residents; and

8 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey's diversified economy and various industries make it more
9 of a challenge for farm operators to find, train and retain adequate labor; and

10 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey's continuous dedication to protecting and improving the
11 environment has created the need for farmers to be ever-mindful of the need to be stewards
12 of their land, water and other natural resources, both for the benefit of their own operations
13 and for the quality of life of all residents; and

14 **WHEREAS**, for these reasons, New Jersey farmers face unique challenges in their
15 efforts to keep their farm operations viable and thriving, creating the need to rely on certain
16 government programs to help them meet these challenges; and

17 **WHEREAS**, the State of New Jersey can cover the costs of operating these essential
18 government programs only with the assistance of federal funding; and

19 **WHEREAS**, the federal Farm Bill, expected to be renewed in 2019, historically
20 contains within it the spending priorities for the nation's agricultural industry, including
21 nutritional programs that are interconnected with agriculture; and

22 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey farms' needs from federal programs are significantly
23 different from those of farms in many other regions of the country; and

24 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey's diverse agriculture, typified by farms ranging from as
25 small as five or 10 acres to those over more than 3,000 acres, which produce a variety of

26 crops, benefits from a strong emphasis on Specialty Crop Block Grants designed to increase
27 consumer awareness about fresh produce, improve access to foreign markets, ensure food
28 safety, strengthen research efforts, enhance conservation programs and encourage
29 investment and efficiency; and

30 **WHEREAS**, nursery and greenhouse production accounted for more than \$400
31 million in farmgate receipts in 2016, and fruits, vegetables, berries and tree nuts accounted
32 for more than \$337 million in farmgate receipts in 2016; and

33 **WHEREAS**, a broad array of agricultural trade associations representing United
34 States growers and shippers are continuing to work on achieving mutual objectives for the
35 Farm Bill and assuring a common platform across regions, commodities, and other interests,
36 including allies in support of the production of “specialty crops”; and

37 **WHEREAS**, the agricultural sectors dominant in New Jersey would not be well
38 served by direct payment to growers, but instead by building the long-term competitiveness
39 and sustainability of specialty crop production in the United States; and

40 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey works closely with the United States Department of
41 Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service to support a number of feeding programs
42 that bring nutritious products to children, the elderly and those in need; and

43 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey is committed to bringing more of the fruits and vegetables
44 produced by its farmers into these programs to ensure that the offerings are of the highest
45 practicable nutritional value; and

46 **WHEREAS**, funding targeted for these feeding programs can be stretched by
47 ensuring, whenever possible, that products be bought locally first, regionally second and
48 nationally and internationally as a last resort, thereby cutting the associated transportation
49 costs, especially in times of rising fuel prices; and

50 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey also is home to numerous grain and forage producers who
51 receive a much needed benefit from the Farm Bill’s commodities funding; and

52 **WHEREAS**, grain and forage producers strongly support a minimum safety net for
53 grain producers throughout New Jersey; and

54 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey is also home to dairy and livestock producers whose
55 stewardship maintains a considerable amount of agricultural lands and support for the crop
56 sectors that sell feed to livestock producers helps to keep costs to those livestock producers
57 from rising; and

58 **WHEREAS**, the approach of the federal government toward relying on subsidized
59 crop insurance premiums as a farmer's sole protection from the devastation of severe
60 weather events – including hurricanes, other persistent flooding rains, hail, extreme heat,
61 drought or any other extreme weather, as well as market loss due to quality and low prices –
62 appears to be increasing rather than decreasing, since it is a way of addressing a farmer's
63 losses without the additional expense of direct ad-hoc payments; and

64 **WHEREAS**, federal crop insurance programs, in which premiums paid by farmers
65 are subsidized with federal funds, receive their authorizations and operating parameters
66 through the Farm Bill; and

67 **WHEREAS**, producers need a better and defined program for potatoes that would
68 protect them from seed-borne diseases such as Dickeya; and

69 **WHEREAS**, apple growers in the various counties need a program that would
70 encompass the entire state, not limited to counties, especially as some orchards in the
71 northern part of the state cross county lines, with one county having a defined program and
72 established yields and the neighboring counties not having a defined program, leaving
73 producers at a disadvantage in the under-established counties.

74 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates of the 104th State
75 Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 6-7, 2019, urge
76 the Congress of the United States to include within the next Farm Bill, and urge the New
77 Jersey Congressional Delegation to advocate for and support the following: ensure the

78 recently passed Farm Bill is implemented in the way that best assists New Jersey farmers
79 and that future Farm Bills also reflect the diversity of New Jersey agriculture.