**RESOLUTION # 34**

**NEW JERSEY FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES EDUCATION**

**WHEREAS**, the 44 secondary instructional programs related to agriculture are

known as New Jersey Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Education and include

experiential learning (Supervised Agricultural Experiences) and leadership development

through FFA, the appropriate Career and Technical Student Organization for these

programs; and

**WHEREAS**, today’s high-tech Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Education

curricula, taught by 63 agriculture-certified instructors, is infused with rigorous academics

and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) components provided by

Curriculum in Agricultural Science Education (CASE) and other agricultural science

education courses, to ensure global competitiveness, student achievement and well

prepared graduates for over 300 career areas in the food, agriculture, renewable energy, and

environmental industries; and

**WHEREAS**, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture’s Office of Food, Agriculture

and Natural Resources Education conducts the national State Teach Agriculture Results

(STAR) program to develop strategies to address teacher recruitment, retention, and the high demand for agriculture teachers; and

**WHEREAS,** an increased supply of teachers will be needed to fill vacancies caused

by retirements and/or to provide newly established programs with properly trained and

certified teachers for Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Education, thereby helping to

increase the human capital needed to serve the agriculture industry; and

**WHEREAS,** farm viability is a major concern within New Jersey; and

**WHEREAS**, Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Education has had a long history of preparing young adults for agriculture and related careers, and many New Jersey FFA members have taken leadership positions in the agricultural community; and

**WHEREAS,** there is a need demonstrated by the number of student applications to the secondary Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resource Education Choice Program wishing to pursue their learning in preparation for a career or entrance into a college course of study or an accredited trade school program; and

**WHEREAS** many counties have only one school system participating in this area of choice; in Monmouth County, for example, only 33 percent of these students were able to be placed; and

**WHEREAS**, more programs are needed to provide an increased supply of human

capital required to fill the annual employment opportunities in Food, Agriculture, Renewable

Energy and the Environment; and

**WHEREAS**, Public Law 115-224 “Strengthening Career and Technical Education for

the 21st Century Act,” also known as Perkins V, requires data-driven decision-making and a

“local” needs assessment indicating labor market needs to support existing and future Food,

Agriculture and Natural Resources Education programs; and

**WHEREAS**, Perkins V also identifies industry-valued credentials as a qualifier for a

rigorous program of study and as a measure of readiness for college and the 21st century

world of work; and

**WHEREAS**, the food, agriculture, renewable energy and environmental industry

sector lacks industry-valued credentials, especially credentials appropriate for secondary

aged students.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 110th State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 5-6, 2025, support the development of new agriculture programs in parts of the state where human capital is most needed to serve the broad agriculture industry.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that school-based Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Education be included as part of the solution to farm viability.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that we support the identification or creation of statewide industry-valued credentials for secondary-aged students in cooperation with industry trade organizations that are in high demand within the industry and can lead to better job prospects, higher wages, and career advancement.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we support and further encourage the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences (SEBS) to continue improving and marketing the five-year agricultural science education program that currently exists; the development of the agricultural education option in the undergraduate major in Agriculture and Food Systems, including the development of the courses focusing specifically on agricultural education; efforts made by SEBS to utilize the Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education to recruit high-quality undergraduates interested in agriculture careers; and the development of the post-bachelor’s program at the Rutgers Graduate School of Education (GSE), developed and offered jointly with the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, leading to the degree of Ed.M. in Agricultural Science Education.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we support continuing a strong and viable school-based Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Education program in New Jersey through a continuing memorandum of understanding between the New Jersey Department of Education and the New Jersey Department of Agriculture.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we support continual improvement of resources and services to all New Jersey instructional programs for food, agriculture and natural resources education at the middle, secondary, and post-secondary levels; and that we support the development of innovative academically/STEM-enhanced agriculture instructional programs, and support the increase in supply of agriculture teachers.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that we strongly urge the NJDA to encourage the New Jersey Department of Education to study the effectiveness of placement in the Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Education Choice program offered in our secondary schools, and support ways to expand the program capacity to meet the industry and student interest needs.