

State Agriculture and Rural Leaders

Resolution 2010-1

A Resolution on Establishing Public Policy on Animal Care Standards

WHEREAS: Legislation and regulations affecting animal care have typically been developed through a legislative committee process with significant input from individuals and organizations with relevant expertise; and

WHEREAS: In recent years, ballot initiatives have been increasingly utilized as an alternative to the traditional legislative process; and

WHEREAS: Ballot initiatives are poorly designed for addressing complex issues such as setting animal care standards in that they are narrow in their mechanism of effect, limit the amount and detail of content that can be provided to the public, and offer minimal opportunities for expert input; and

WHEREAS: Regulatory actions related to animal care need to arise from a consensus built via a greater public understanding of industry practices *and* a greater industry understanding of public attitudes and ethical needs; and

WHEREAS: While ballot initiatives can precipitate a polarizing public debate based on incomplete information, legislative and regulatory processes typically engage multiple experts and viewpoints and facilitate discussion, thereby contributing to responsible recommendations that can be practically implemented, and the end result benefits animals, those in the animal use industries and consumers; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that State Agriculture and Rural Leaders urges state legislatures to adopt legislation creating livestock care standards boards, or authorizing existing agencies, for the purpose of establishing standards governing the care and well-being of livestock and poultry.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that livestock care standards boards will strive for continual improvement of animal care systems through comprehensive evaluations that are based on sound science, with appropriate consideration for the practical implementation of their recommendations and societal preferences regarding animal use.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in establishing standards, the livestock care standards boards consider factors that include, but are not limited to, agricultural best management practices for care and well-being, biosecurity, disease prevention, animal morbidity and mortality data, food safety practices, and the protection of local, affordable food supplies for consumers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that representation on such boards be well-balanced, both in technical expertise and viewpoint.