

New Mexico Acequia Association

Supporting Creation of a Farms for the Future Program
Resolution 2007-02

Whereas, the New Mexico Acequia Association has articulated part of its mission is to strengthen the farming and ranching traditions of our families and communities,

Whereas, one of our major objectives is to increase the cultivation of foods that are culturally and spiritually meaningful to our families and communities,

Whereas, our food and farming traditions are central to our identity as land-based people,

Whereas, farming and ranching continue to be part of a way of life and livelihood despite major economic disadvantages and challenges,

Whereas, part of the resiliency of traditional agriculture are the cultural ties to the land and the traditional knowledge practiced by many growers in the region,

Whereas, some of the major challenges facing farmers and ranchers are threats to farmland and water rights, rising production costs, lack of workers, and declining agricultural and food processing infrastructure,

Whereas, there is also great potential to produce a greater extent of food that is also eaten locally and with only a 15% shift in consumer expenditures, \$49 million dollars could be put into the regional economy,

Whereas, there are several farms and ranchers that demonstrate successful models in the area of beef and meat production, year-round vegetable production, and other techniques that have proven successful,

Whereas, there are many different strategies needed to increase the extent of locally grown food including youth mentorship, farmer education, financial incentives, marketing and feasibility studies,

Whereas, the New Mexico Acequia Association as a membership based organization comprised of farmers and ranchers should choose to focus on objectives that provide direct benefits to farmers and ranchers,

Whereas, the Nuestra Cosecha project committee has identified some policy objectives based on findings from the Northern New Mexico Food System Assessment which serve to benefit farmers and ranchers directly,

Whereas, one of the most applicable models to initiate in New Mexico is the Farms for the Future Program which has great success in Maine and other states in providing a support system for farmers and ranchers seeking to strengthen their economic viability,

Whereas, the Farms for the Future program in Maine is a two phase program in which farmers and ranchers receive specialized business and estate planning assistance followed by a second phase with a cost share grant to implement the business plan,

Therefore, be it resolved that the Congreso de las Acequias supports a legislative initiative to establish a Farms for the Future Program in New Mexico and supports an appropriation to the NMSU College of Agriculture,

Be it further resolved that copies of this resolution be transmitted to Governor Bill Richardson, New Mexico State Legislature, and the NMSU College of Agriculture.