

BY: Senator PARKER

MEMORIALIZING Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim
July 8, 2021, as Beet Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official days that are set aside to recognize and applaud the agricultural leaders of commerce and industry whose accomplishments contribute to the economic health and prosperity of the communities of the State of New York and to the quality of life of its people; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim July 8, 2021, as Beet Day in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Beet Day; and

WHEREAS, Summer means many things to many different people, but for those in agriculture it has become known for its ultimate endless farming; and

WHEREAS, Established on Friday, July 8, 2016, National Beet Day kicks off an epic summer harvest and promotes the public's participation in beet excitement, games and bake-offs; and

WHEREAS, New York is second only to Wisconsin in the production of table beets; the processing industry, based largely around Seneca Foods plant in Western New York, is valued at \$1.8 million, and the farm gate value of the beets grown by 246 farms across the state is estimated at \$8.47 million; and

WHEREAS, Since 2014, the New York Farm Viability Institute has played a vital role in the exponential growth of New York table beets; and

WHEREAS, In 2015 Cornell Plant Pathologist Sarah Pethybridge and a Senior Extension Educator for the Cornell Cooperative Extension Vegetable Program and her colleague Julie Kikkert submitted a proposal to the Farm Viability Institute to develop solutions to manage weeds and disease in beets; funding was denied; and

WHEREAS, Although it was a strong research plan and addressed known challenges for beet growers, it was a high dollar request and there were not many acres of beets being grown; in addition, there was limited infrastructure for processing; and

WHEREAS, Three months later, Sarah Pethybridge and Julie Kikkert successfully sought funding through the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBG) which is administered by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets in partnership with NYFVI; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, during this time it was announced that Love

Beets USA LLC, a joint venture between LiDestri Foods Inc. of Fairport and the United Kingdom's G's Fresh Ltd., was coming to Rochester; and

WHEREAS, Since that first proposal was funded, researchers have been systematically working to develop solutions for the booming industry's most pressing challenges; the first project, focusing on weed management and the predominant fungal disease affecting foliar health, was completed this year, optimizing recommendations for weed and disease management in both conventional and organic production systems; and

WHEREAS, Three New York growers participated as an advisory group for the project with 603 people attending presentations on the topic; outcomes for the New York table beet industry include reductions in unwarranted fungicide usage, development of best practice fungicide resistance management guidelines, and improved profitability and sustainability; and

WHEREAS, In 2017, the team was successful in securing SCBG funding to trial novel seed treatments for early season disease control, and in 2018, they made the case for funding to develop a forecasting system for foliar leaf disease to help growers make judicious use of their fungicides; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is now moved to commemorate the observance of Beet Day and to acknowledge the efforts of citizens who harvest beets; and

WHEREAS, National Beet Day is a day to celebrate and honor all the farmers who harvest beets and to recognize beets as a vital industry and economic driver in New York State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim July 8, 2021, as Beet Day in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York.