



Wm. Donald Clifton II
Secretary of Agriculture

JFC BUDGET PRESENTATION

FISCAL YEAR 2026



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE



PROMOTING GROWTH, PROTECTING CONSUMERS



AGRICULTURE

DELAWARE'S #1 INDUSTRY

FAMILY FARMS

On 523,000 acres of farmland, Delaware's 2,158 family farms produce a wide variety of agricultural products. These include corn, soybeans, wheat, poultry, fruits, and vegetables.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Food and agriculture industries provide 75,000 jobs and \$13 billion in economic activity to the state, including \$2.1 billion in direct sales.



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE



THE DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

VISION AND MISSION

VISION

The Delaware Department of Agriculture supports farmers and consumers alike, working to sustain and grow our industry, promote fresh and seasonal products, and build consumer trust in Delaware.

MISSION

The staff of the Delaware Department of Agriculture strive to effectively and efficiently sustain and promote the viability of food, fiber, and agricultural industries in Delaware through quality services that protect and enhance the environment, health, and welfare of the general public.



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF
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THE DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

OPERATING BUDGET AND STAFFING

**\$12.736
Million**

**Recommended
Budget**



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF
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Delaware Department of Agriculture Sections		
Administration (Office of the Secretary, Communications & Marketing, Finance) (4)	Standardbred Breeders' Fund	Plant Industries (3)
Aglands Preservation & Planning	Food Products Inspection (10)	Poultry & Animal Health (1)
Agricultural Compliance	Nutrient Management (3)	Thoroughbred Racing Commission (1)
Delaware Forest Service (5)	Pesticides (1)	Weights & Measures (1)
Harness Racing Commission (1)		

- 188 FTE and casual/seasonal employees in 13 sections
- Vacancy situation
 - In collaborating with DHR, we have reclassified positions, allowing us to hire high performers and adapt to the changes in agriculture, including the new Chief of Planning in Aglands.
- Structural Change
 - Deputy Attorney General IV from 50/50 GF/NSF to 50/50 GF/ASF
- Base Adjustment
 - 2.0M Ag Production Insurance Assistance Program



SPENDING AUTHORITY INCREASES

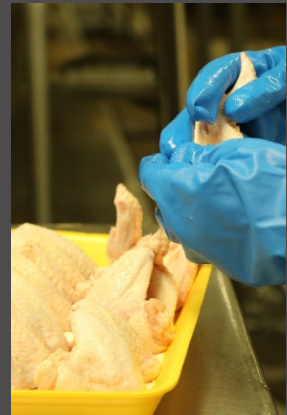
REQUEST: \$83.9 (ASF)

BACKGROUND

Our Pesticides Section, the Grain Inspection Program in our Plant Industries Section, and the Poultry and Egg Inspection Program in our Food Products Inspection Section have all sustained significant expense increases over the past several years in order to carry out their regulatory duties.

FUNDS REQUESTED WILL...

Accommodate increases in contractual expenses for Salesforce, SEUS invoicing to cover DTI charges, the Statewide Cost Allocation Plan (SWCAP), and equipment needs to maintain industry standards.



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DAIRY OPERATIONS RISK MGT COVERAGE

DOOR OPENER REQUEST: \$87.9 (GF)

BACKGROUND

USDA runs a voluntary program providing risk management coverage to dairy producers that pays out based on the difference between the national price of milk and the average cost of feed.

THESE FUNDS WILL...

Meet the requirement of the Act (HB 392) to reimburse eligible dairy producers for up to the full amount of the premium paid to participate in the USDA Dairy Margin Coverage Program, helping to keep the state's remaining dairies in business.



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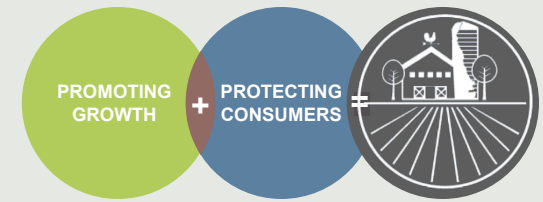


AGENCY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- \$ of gross receipts for Delaware farmers markets (millions)
 - For the third year in a row, Delaware farmers markets have broken this record with \$4.46M in 2024 sales (FY25), indicating consumers support family farms producing Delaware Grown produce and value-added products, which in turn bolsters the local economy.
- # of pet food/animal/livestock feed products approved for registration
 - The funds from these registrations are provided to the Division of Public Health’s Office of Animal Welfare to conduct its spay and neuter program, which reduces unwanted litters, pet homelessness, and the risk of zoonotic disease to the public. FY24: 20,265 products
- % of timber harvests that follow a management plan (acres)
 - Through active forest management of state-owned and private lands, we increase the chance of optimal forest health and contribute to the dynamics of a sustainable forest market. In addition, this benefits all Delawareans by providing improved air quality, water quality, carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, and forest vigor to reduce wildfire risk. FY24: 41%



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AGENCY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- # of avian influenza (AI) tests & # of positive AI tests
 - This is an indicator of the number of flocks being sent for processing, and when we have a positive, it shows the testing system works preventing the flock from ever leaving the farm. FY24: 6,199 tests, 0 positive cases
- Tons of poultry litter – manure relocated within and exported from Delaware for land application, and relocated to an alternative use projects
 - This is an indicator that our farms are finding a use for a very valuable soil amendment, which, when applied in accordance with a landowner's nutrient management plan, decreases the need for chemical fertilizers and protects our waterways. FY24: 48,931 tons
- # of acres of prime farmland permanently preserved
 - In Round 28, 40 farms with 2,262 acres of land were permanently preserved. With 155,486 acres in permanent easements, Delaware has preserved 29.7% of its farmland.





AGLANDS PRESERVATION PROGRAM

UPDATE

Round 29

- 287 farms undergoing appraisal
- 29,500 acres
- Anticipated bid submission May 2025
- Announcement Summer 2025

Challenge: Land costs have increased significantly!

Based on last year's average discounted rate (50%), of \$5,000/easement acre, it would cost \$150 M to purchase all 287 easements in Round 29.



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FOREST INITIATIVE FUND & TREE PLANTING UPDATE

Through the Delaware Forest Service's **Forest Initiative Fund (FIF)**, designed to help Delaware landowners, 105,050 trees were planted in 14 low-value sites, in regard to habitat and forest productivity.

Average cost per tree: \$0.51

Total installation cost per tree: \$1.38

Overall Tree Planting:

- By July 2024, DFS staff had planted 1,013,149 trees, exceeding the last administration's goal of planting 1 Million trees from 2021 - 2030.



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TRAINER EDUCATOR POSITION UPDATE

- Trainer Educator successfully onboarded in January 2024.
- Serves as Delaware FFA Executive Secretary and LEADelaware Coordinator.
- Critical for ensuring a pipeline for a skilled agricultural workforce and advocates for our industry.
- Highlight: 95th Delaware FFA State Convention in March



LEADELAWARE
LEADERSHIP AND AGRICULTURE



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HB 87 AG PRODUCTION INSURANCE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

UPDATE

- HB 87 was signed into law in July 2024 on Governor's Day at the State Fair to assist producers with acquiring adequate coverage of crop insurance to ensure the viability of Delaware's agriculture production.
- Currently in the final stages of MOU review with the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA), with expectations to launch the program in the next couple of weeks.
- Anticipate full usage of \$2 Million allocated



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MEYER ADMINISTRATION

VALUES

INTEGRITY

Actions speak louder than words – actions build trust. We will lead with transparency and accountability to ensure every decision serves the public good.

EFFICIENCY

Government should work smarter, not harder. We will eliminate waste, streamline services, and prioritize execution over excuses.

COLLABORATION

Lasting change requires teamwork. We will break down silos, build strong partnerships, and deliver solutions that work.



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