



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture

Delaware's #1 industry, providing more than 20,000 jobs and \$8 billion of economic activity, including \$1.5 billion in direct sales from our 2,300 family farms. Delaware farmers produce a variety of agricultural products on 525,000 acres of farmland, including corn, soybeans, wheat, poultry, and vegetables.

Aglands Preservation & Planning
Agriculture Compliance
Communications & Marketing
Delaware Forest Service
Delaware Harness Racing Commission
Delaware Standardbred Breeders' Fund
Food Products Inspection
Nutrient Management
Pesticides
Plant Industries
Poultry & Animal Health
Thoroughbred Racing Commission
Weights & Measures

Promoting Growth, Protecting Consumers

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. Our dedicated staff strives to effectively and efficiently protect and enhance the environment, health, and welfare of the general public.

The Department's FY22 Budget request includes specific projects that will help support agriculture, protect our environment, and serve consumers.

FY22 Budget Highlights

Farm and Food Policy Council (\$64.0)

Formed in 2018, the Council seeks to develop a Healthy Food Retail Program to support and promote healthy food options in neighborhood retail outlets throughout Delaware. These funds will allow the Council to hire a consultant to help guide this work by providing insights and expertise regarding effective methodologies, data, and staff support.

Agricultural Compliance (\$15.0)

The Agricultural Compliance contractual services budget can no longer meet the increasing costs of the laboratory. Over 70 percent of the section's current contractual budget (\$37,500) is used for recurring annual costs, including Fleet Services, printer leases, software support, and chemical gas tank rental fees. The remaining funds cannot cover the repair costs and preventative maintenance of the lab equipment. This request will help the lab properly maintain and repair the instruments, which provide vital information to Delaware's Nutrient Management Program and all consumers.

Nutrient Management (\$5.2)

The current \$500 travel budget does not cover the current expenditures. The travel expenses alone for the Nutrient Management Commissioners to attend monthly meetings exceeds \$1,200. The program has significant costs related to travel for training and out-of-state conferences, such as those related to Chesapeake Bay water quality. This increase will address this current budget shortfall.

Animal Health Digital Application (\$85.0)

These funds will allow DDA to purchase enterprise management software to help our Poultry and Animal Health section, along with an annual maintenance fee. The software tracks poultry/livestock illnesses and mortality; farm animal welfare complaints and cases; stray livestock investigations; laboratory specimen testing; animal traces into/out of Delaware; licenses and permits (livestock dealers, exotic animals, etc.); and emergency response to disease outbreaks. Currently used in many other states, these systems help to improve efficiency and accountability. DDA would work with DTI to implement this enterprise management system.

Farmland Preservation

Delaware's farmland preservation program has two steps. Landowners first voluntarily enroll their farm into a **10-year Preservation District** agreement. The following year, landowners can apply to sell their farm's development rights, known as a **preservation easement**, keeping the farm preserved for perpetuity.

Agricultural Easements

Delaware has permanent preservation easements on more than 1,000 farms, totaling **139,000 acres**, or approximately **26 percent of Delaware farmland**.

- **Kent County:** 503 easements on 70,406 acres (38 percent of county farmland)
- **New Castle County:** 105 easements on 14,664 acres (21 percent of county farmland)
- **Sussex County:** 453 easements on 53,800 acres (18 percent of county farmland)

Total easement costs: \$245 million

State funds: \$166.0 million
Federal: \$60.0 million
County: \$15.0 million
Other: \$4.0 million

Total landowner discount: \$349 million

Upcoming Rounds

Farms eligible for **Round 25** easement selection, using FY21 funding, expected to be announced in May:

- **Kent County:** 74 farms on 6,126 acres
- **New Castle County:** 12 farms on 870 acres
- **Sussex County:** 99 farms on 9,371 acres

Total: 185 farms on 16,367 acres

New 2020 district applications:

- **Kent County:** 19 farms on 1,587 acres
- **New Castle County:** 1 farm on 283 acres
- **Sussex County:** 20 farms on 1,305 acres

Total: 40 farms on 3,175 acres

Young Farmer Program

The Young Farmer Loan Program offers a **30-year, no-interest loan** to help young farmers purchase farmland, one of the chief obstacles to starting out in the business. Farms are placed into a permanent preservation easement. To date, **37 young farmers** have received **\$9.0 million in loans** to purchase **2,858 acres** of land.



Funding a Legacy

Funding Aglands Preservation means leaving a legacy for the future. The program allows Delaware family farmers to know that their family's history in agriculture, their hard work, and dedication to the land, the environment, and the industry will last forever.

Full funding of Delaware Aglands Preservation for FY22 at \$10 million would ensure that the Department is able to match any potential funding sources, including county funds, USDA funds, and Department of Defense REPI funds.

Joint Finance Committee | Department of Agriculture
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