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This document outlines several accomplishments of the Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) under the leadership of Secretary of Agriculture Michael T. Scuse during both the Minner and Carney Administrations.

Agricultural Land Preservation

- **#2 in the U.S.** – American Farmland Trust ranked the Delaware Agricultural Land Preservation Program the 2nd most effective program in the U.S. The program has preserved almost 30% of Delaware farmland with 155,486 acres.
- **Oversaw 40.5% of Delaware’s farmland preservation and 60% of program funding** – During his two terms as Delaware Secretary of Agriculture, the program preserved 687 farms on 63,100 acres with state funding of \$122.5 million.
- **1st NRCS-ACEP certified entity in the U.S.** – In 2018, the Delaware Aglands Program became the first Natural Resources Conservation Service – Agricultural Conservation Easement Program certified entity. With this designation, the Aglands team is certified to create documents and deeds for settlement, making the program more efficient and, therefore, preserving farmland more quickly.
- **Created the Forestland Preservation Program** – Created the Forestland Preservation Program in the Minner administration to preserve forested properties in managed timber production. While funding dried up under the next governor, when Scuse returned to office, he reinstated the program in 2019. The program has purchased 20 forestland easements on more than 1,650 acres, with another 2,200 acres in 10-year forestland areas. An additional 40,600 acres of forest have been preserved under Aglands Preservation.
- **Round 28** – This announcement recognized Governor Carney for preserving 403 family farms during his administration, the highest number of farms in the program’s history.
- **Delaware Farmland Preservation License Plate** – Designed and released in the Minner administration, the plate was made available so Delawareans purchasing it could help preserve farmland.

Agriculture and the Environment

- **Cover Crop Investment** – A significant increase in funding has helped offset the costs for farmers to plant cover crops, which reduce agricultural nutrient runoff, improve water quality, and mitigate climate change.
- **Positive rating from farmers** – Delaware’s Nutrient Management Program was the region’s only program that received a positive impression from farmers based on an independent peer-reviewed survey.
- **Helping farmers be the best stewards of the land** – To accomplish this, DDA provides funding for manure relocation and mortality rendering; county conservation cover crop programs; assistance to farmers for nutrient management planning; and Extension agent positions at the University of Delaware that focus on both agriculture and turf nutrient management.
- **Improving the environment through increasing forestland** – Recognizing the importance of planting trees to improve the environment, the Delaware Forest Service made a major effort to plant 1,013,149 trees from 2020 to 2024 to contribute to Governor Carney’s legacy.
- **Over 3 million dollars awarded for tree planting** – Through the Urban and Community Forestry Tree Grant Program, 538 grants were awarded from 2001 to 2008 and 2017 to 2024, providing communities and municipalities with \$3,059,409 to plant trees.
- **Re-establishing wildlife habitat through sustainable forestry practices** – The Delaware Forest Service conducted a 63-acre Savanna Thinning, in partnership with the Tall Timbers Research Institute, to develop habitat for reintroducing wild quail to Taber State Forest. Wildlife biologists have noted an increase from 9 to 27 bird species now inhabiting this section of the forest.
- **Old Poultry House Demolition Cost Share** – As producers upgraded to more environmentally friendly poultry houses, Secretary Scuse saw a need to address abandoned poultry houses that had reached the end of their lifespan. He developed a cost-share program to help offset the removal costs to lessen their

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. The staff at the Delaware Department of Agriculture strive to effectively and efficiently protect and enhance the environment, health, and welfare of the general public.

environmental impact and enhance Delaware's rural landscape. A total of 56 abandoned poultry houses were removed through this program.

Food Access for Delawareans

- **Created the Delaware Council on Farm and Food Policy**—Along with Deputy Secretary Nikko Brady, the Council was created to maintain updated knowledge and awareness about food access opportunities and concerns.
- **First State Food System Grants** – Secured \$2 million in ARPA funding to improve the capacity, efficiency, and coordination of Delaware food producers and strengthen Delaware's food supply chain.
- **2020 Award recipient** – The Council received the 2020 Lieutenant Governor's Challenge Wellness Leadership Award for its work promoting nutrition through data analysis and improving healthy food access.
- **Local Food Purchase Assistance funding** – Secured \$3,064,266 in USDA funding to help local and underserved producers maintain and improve Delaware's food and agricultural supply resiliency.

Protecting Agriculture

- **COVID-19** – The Department worked with all agriculture sectors to navigate issues related to COVID-19, including the understanding that without agriculture, Delawareans cannot eat.
- **Avian Influenza** – Delaware has successfully protected our commercial and backyard flocks from Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza by quickly stomping out this virus utilizing a Unified Command between Delaware, Maryland, and USDA and working closely with the industry and other stakeholders. In 2004, Secretary Scuse led Delaware and Maryland through low-pathogenicity avian influenza, with two farms in Delaware and one in Maryland being impacted. USDA-APHIS utilized Delaware's response as an example of how to handle future outbreaks. In 2022, Delaware was the fifth state to experience HPAI in a commercial operation, and the first state with over 1 million birds impacted. Again, under the leadership of Secretary Scuse, the spread of the virus was quickly stopped, with only three commercial operations in Delaware impacted.
- **Trade and export** – Secretary Scuse worked with producers, agribusinesses, government officials, and agricultural advocacy groups to ensure that sectors had the latest information to help our producers and minimize impacts on trade and export during the COVID-19 pandemic, the HPAI outbreak, the Francis Scott Key Bridge disaster, and other interstate commerce challenges.
- **Delaware Agricultural Mediation Program** – Supported creation of the new agricultural mediation program, a

USDA-funded non-profit providing low-cost mediation to Delaware farmers with legal conflicts, neighbor disputes, family inheritance concerns, and more.

- **Delaware Crop Insurance Assistance and Dairy Margins Subsidies** – Working with the Delaware Farm Bureau, legislation was passed and signed into law in 2024, to provide Delaware producers with a 30% subsidy for crop insurance premiums and a 100% subsidy for dairy margin coverage.
- **Delaware Agricultural Finance Program** – Recognizing that financing is the top barrier for a young or beginning farmer, Secretary Scuse saw an opportunity to re-invent the DRIP Program, using the funding allocated from the Delaware Economic Development Authority in the Division of Small Business, to help farmers and aquaculture producers purchase the equipment they need to get started or expand their operations.
- **LEADelaware** – Secretary Scuse collaborated with Dr. Robin Morgan, Dean of the University of Delaware's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, to create LEADelaware. This two-year leadership program helps to develop the next generation of leaders in production, agribusiness, and policy in the food and fiber industries.
- **Delaware Ag Week** – Partnering with University of Delaware Cooperative Extension's Ed Kee, the two partnered to create Delaware Ag Week, a one-stop shop for farmers to learn about the latest research, earn continuing education credits, and network with agribusinesses.

Supporting Agriculture Markets

- **Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grants** – Awarded \$2,151,300 through a cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service, to administer the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program with funding from the American Rescue Plan Act. More than \$1.7 million in funds were made available through a competitive process to build resilience across the middle of the supply chain, with six applicants selected for Equipment-Only Projects and two selected for Infrastructure Projects.
- **Specialty Crop Block Grant** – During his first term in office, Secretary Scuse fought hard to get funding in the Farm Bill to help support research efforts to improve the competitiveness of Delaware's specialty crop industry. Since he started his second term as Secretary of Agriculture, Delaware has secured a total of \$3,238,574 in Specialty Crop Block Grant Program funding from the USDA-Agricultural Marketing Service to support 72 multi-year projects focusing on research, marketing, or consumer education.
- **Delaware Grown Branding** – Through consumer market research, DDA was able to understand the consumer

perception of Delaware specialty crops and assess brand development from the consumer standpoint. The Delaware Grown brand was created to help increase awareness of Delaware's specialty crops, open new markets, and increase farm profits for Delaware family farmers.

- **Trade Missions** – Secretary Scuse led trade missions to over 27 countries in his roles at the Delaware Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture. He represented the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) at the World Trade Organization Conference in Geneva, Switzerland.

Representing Agriculture

- **Chesapeake Bay Program – Principals' Staff Committee**, Member
- **Delaware Aglands Preservation Foundation Board**, Trustee
- **Delaware Cabinet Committee on State Planning**, Chair, Member
- **Delaware Center for the Inland Bays Board of Directors**, Member
- **Delaware Council on Farm and Food Policy**, Executive Committee
- **Delaware Homeland Security Council**, Member
- **Delaware Open Space Council**, Ex-Officio Member
- **Delaware State Fair**, Board Member
- **Ducks Unlimited**, Member, Board of Directors
- **Eastern Shore Land Conservancy**, Board of Directors

- **EPA, Local Government Advisory Committee**, Member, 2018 – 2022
- **National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), International Trade and Marketing Committee**, Vice Chair, 2006 - 2008
- **National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), Natural Resources & Environment Committee**, Chair, 2021 – 2024
- **National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA)**, Vice President, 2008
- **Northeast Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NEASDA)**, President, 2003
- **Quality Deer Management Association**, Member
- **University of Delaware College of Agriculture and Natural Resources**, Advisory Board Member
- **University of Delaware EPSCoR**, Committee Member

Awards and Recognition

- **2024, Order of the First State**, Presented by Governor John Carney
- **2019, VIP Citation Award**, National FFA Organization
- **2019, Delaware Champion of Trade Award**, World Trade Center
- **2016, Ambassador Circle Award**, NASDA
- **2012, Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service to Agriculture, Delaware Department of Agriculture**, Presented by Secretary Kee
- **2006, Medal of Achievement**, Delmarva Poultry Industry