



**Wm. Donald Clifton II**  
**Secretary of Agriculture**

# **DDA: AGLANDS PRESERVATION**

## **SUSSEX PRESERVATION COALITION – WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8**



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF  
**AGRICULTURE**



**WE WORK FOR YOU EVERY DAY**



# DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

## SUSSEX PRESERVATION COALITION

Delaware Department of Agriculture Sections		
Administration	Standardbred Breeders' Fund	Plant Industries
Aglands Preservation & Planning	Food Products Inspection	Poultry & Animal Health
Agricultural Compliance	Nutrient Management	Thoroughbred Racing Commission
Delaware Forest Service	Pesticide Management	Weights & Measures
Harness Racing Commission		

- **Between 190-200** full-time and casual/seasonal employees in 13 sections.
- In 1970, the **Department of Agriculture** was established and assumed all the powers and duties of the **State Board of Agriculture**, the **Bureau of Markets**, the **State Chemist**, the **State Apiarist**, the **State Division of Weights and Measures**, the **State Forestry Department and Commission**, and the **State Farmland Evaluation Advisory Committee**.



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## AGRICULTURE – DELAWARE’S NO. 1 INDUSTRY

### SUSSEX PRESERVATION COALITION

#### LIFEBLOOD OF THE FIRST STATE

On 520,000 acres of farmland, Delaware’s 2,150 family farms produce a wide variety of agricultural products.

These include corn, soybeans, wheat, poultry, fruits, and vegetables.



For livestock, the First State is home to more than 276 million broiler chickens and 10,500 head of cattle.



Sussex County is the nation’s top producer of poultry (176 million, 50 million more than No. 2).



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## AGRICULTURE – DELAWARE’S NO. 1 INDUSTRY

### SUSSEX PRESERVATION COALITION

#### ECONOMIC IMPACT

Food and agriculture industries provide 76,243 direct jobs (**1 in 8 of all First State jobs**) and billions of dollars in total economic activity to the state.

In 2025, registered First State farmers markets **topped \$5 million** in sales for the first time.

**40-50 percent of the U.S. population** is within a day’s drive of Delaware, providing an abundance of customers for First State products.



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## DELAWARE – SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC INFO

SOURCE: USDA ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

### 2023 County Population

Kent	189,789
New Castle	578,592
<b>Sussex</b>	<b>263,509</b>

### Population % Age 62-over

Kent	21.8%
New Castle	20.7%
<b>Sussex</b>	<b>35.1%</b>

### Population Density/Sq. Mile

Kent	237.8
New Castle	1,171.2
<b>Sussex</b>	<b>220.3</b>

### Median Age

Kent	38.5 yrs.
New Castle	39.2 yrs.
<b>Sussex</b>	<b>50.4 yrs.</b>



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## AGLANDS PRESERVATION & PLANNING SUSSEX PRESERVATION COALITION

**SUSSEX – Delaware’s Least Densely Populated County**  
**\*\*220.3 people per square mile\*\***

**Population density (#/sq.mile) in other states’ least-dense county**

<u>State</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>#/sq. mile</u>
Florida	Liberty	10.0
Georgia	Clinch	8.5
Illinois	Pope	12.1
Indiana	Benton	21.8
Iowa	Adams	9.51



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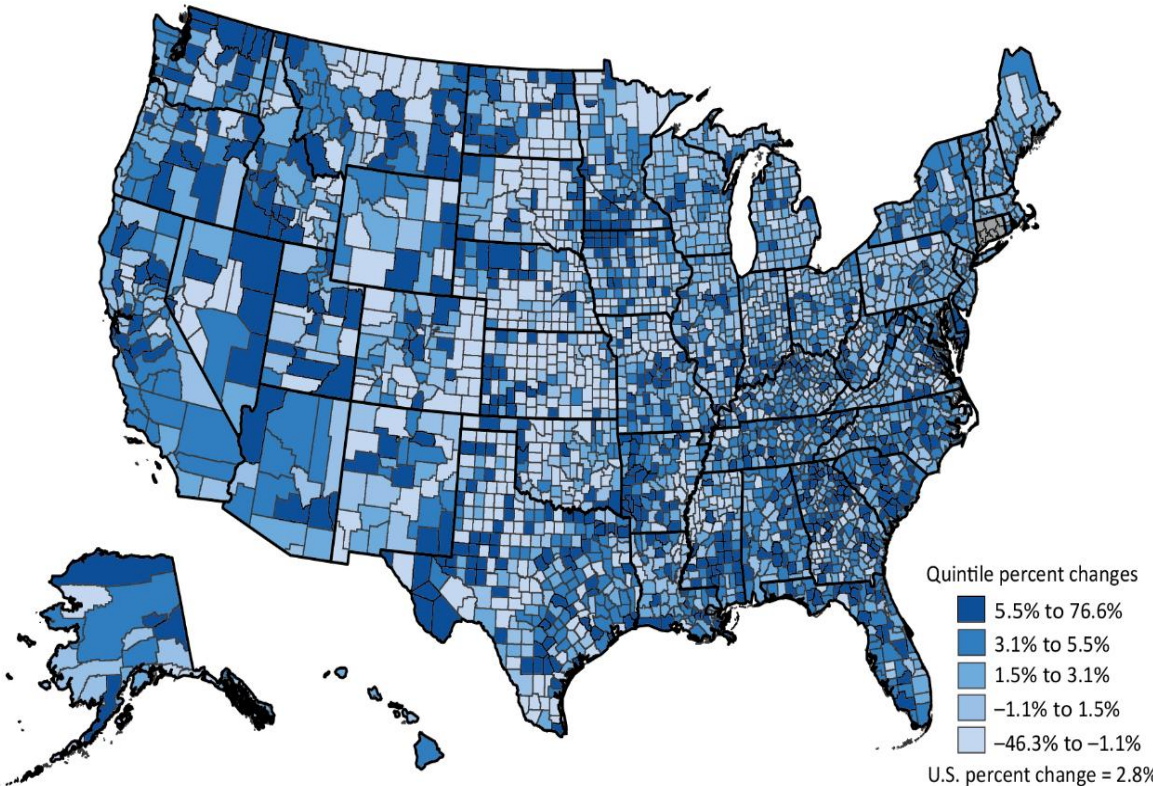
***Sussex’s suburban / rural makeup presents challenges*** 6



# SUSSEX COUNTY – ECONOMIC POWERHOUSE

SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Real GDP: Percent Change for Counties, 2023–2024



## GDP Change

	2022-23	2023-24
Kent	-0.75%	5.60%
NC	0.13%	3.00%
<b>Sussex</b>	<b>6.09%</b>	<b>6.42%</b>

## Sussex Economic Drivers

- \* Agriculture
- \* Housing Construction
- \* Tourism
- \* Retail
- \* Services – Health Care

Note. Connecticut planning region estimates begin in 2024; real GDP percent changes for 2023–2024 are not available for those planning regions.



# AGLANDS PRESERVATION & PLANNING

## SUSSEX PRESERVATION COALITION

### PER CAPITA PERSONAL INCOME 2024

<u>County</u>	<u>Income</u>
Kent	\$55,474
New Castle	\$69,609
<b>Sussex</b>	<b>\$73,647</b>



Source: USDA Economic Research Service (ERS)





## AGLANDS PRESERVATION & PLANNING SUSSEX PRESERVATION COALITION

### Round 29 - 2025

- The 29th round of easement selections by the **Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Foundation** was announced in October, comprising more than 2,800 acres at a cost of \$14.9 million.





## AGLANDS PRESERVATION & PLANNING SUSSEX PRESERVATION COALITION

### Overall

Since the **Aglands Preservation Foundation's** inception in the mid-1990s, more than 1,250 farms and almost 160,000 acres have been preserved.

### Round 30 - 2026

- **350** farms undergoing appraisal, including **90-plus** new applications, the highest number since the late 1990s.
- **Popular program throughout the state:** A portion of the 2025 easements were boosted by contributions from each county:

**Sussex County: \$1,917,156**

**New Castle County: \$225,769**

**Kent County: \$100,000**



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# AGLANDS PRESERVATION & PLANNING

## SUSSEX PRESERVATION COALITION

### Funding

Since 2005, Aglands has been funded through an annual \$10 million transfer from Realty Transfer Tax revenue. *That model has not changed in more than two decades.*

### 2005 vs. 2025

Year	Transfer Tax Revenue (\$M)	Aglands Funding (\$M)	Aglands % of Transfer Tax
2005	\$113.6 million	\$10 million	9 percent
2025	\$235.8 million	\$10 million	4 percent



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## AGLANDS PRESERVATION & PLANNING

### SUSSEX PRESERVATION COALITION

#### 2005 vs. 2025

<u>Year</u>	<u>DDA's Avg. Cost Per Acre</u>
2005	\$2,000
2025	\$5,000

<u>Year</u>	<u>Longterm Farmland Value Per Acre</u>
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Mid-1990s	\$2,000
2025	\$11,000-plus



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## AGLANDS PRESERVATION & PLANNING

### SUSSEX PRESERVATION COALITION

#### KEY POINTS: 2005 vs. 2025

- Transfer tax revenue: **More than doubled**
- Aglands funding flat → **Shrinking share (9 percent → 4 percent)**
- Cost per acre **rising sharply (\$2,000 → \$5,000)**
- Long-term farmland values **increased five times since the mid-1990s**





## AGLANDS PRESERVATION & PLANNING

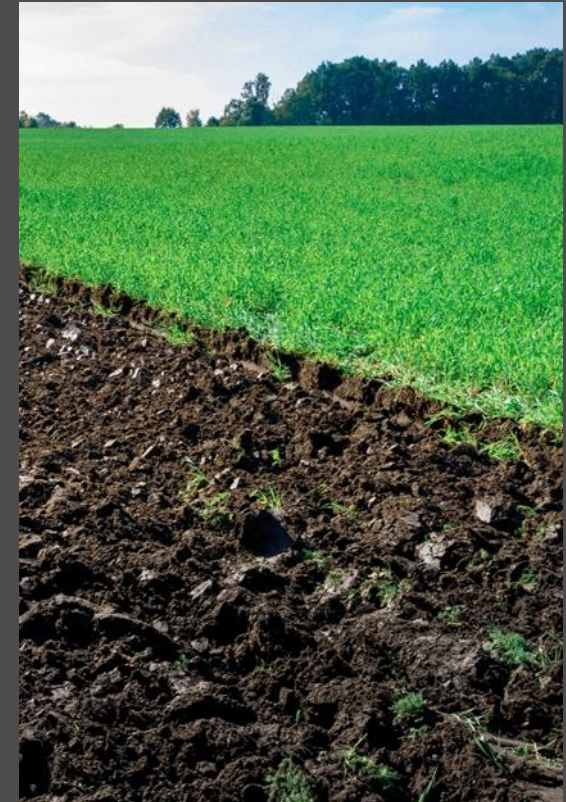
### SUSSEX PRESERVATION COALITION

### FUNDING TOTALS

- **Total Easement Payments:** \$311 million
- **State:** \$223 million
- **Federal:** \$64 million
- **New Castle County:** \$9.6 million
- **Kent County:** \$3.6 million
- **Sussex County:** \$8 million
- **Other Funding:** \$2 million

### LANDOWNER DISCOUNTS

**\$413 million**  
(57% of easement value)





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