

Foreword

Producers need to be aware that the information they report to the Delaware Agricultural Statistics Service is used in many ways to help keep agriculture profitable and the state's number one industry. Recent examples include providing statistics on grain acreage and production to companies interested in establishing ethanol, biodiesel and butanol plants in Delaware and to the Port of Wilmington to explore the feasibility of exporting Delaware produced grain overseas. Also, data on the number of farms and land in farms was provided to state legislators and county officials resulting in legislation for annual funding for farmland preservation.

There are countless uses of the statistics which yield both direct and indirect benefits to the agricultural community. Agricultural Extension Service personnel, crop and marketing consultants, farm organizations, government officials, farm publication economists, and agricultural researchers use the statistics to make production and marketing recommendations to farmers. Financial institutions, agricultural businesses, educational institutions, community planners and others are just a few examples of other users of agricultural statistics.

Without having unbiased official government statistics, farm producers would be at a great disadvantage when it comes to decisions on what to produce, at what price to accept for their production, and in making informed decisions as to what changes should be made to maximize profitability.

The percent of the U.S. population which now reside on farms is less than 1 percent. More than ever, agricultural statistics have become vital in promoting the importance and benefits of agriculture to those who have little knowledge about agriculture. In 2006, over 70,000 Delaware Agriculture statistical placemats were used in schools throughout the state during "Agriculture week" and at the State Fair to educate students and the general public on the importance of agriculture. Further, statistical pocket cards were provided to each State legislator to communicate the importance of agriculture in Delaware.

The data presented in this bulletin are the direct result of, and only made possible by, the voluntary cooperation of our Delaware farmers and agribusinesses who have taken the time to respond to our surveys. We extend our sincere appreciation to them.

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