Delaware Aglands Foundation votes to extend district enrollment for next round

DOVER, Del. (August 19, 2020) – The Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Foundation voted to extend district enrollment until December 31, 2020 to any agricultural landowners who want to preserve their farms. These landowners will have the opportunity to apply for Round 25 in 2021. Before the landowner can submit a bid to sell an easement, the farm must be enrolled in a preservation district.

According to the Delaware AgLands Preservation Program, 201 landowners have submitted bids to sell development rights in the last two years. Of the bids submitted, the Foundation accepted 85 percent for easement purchase. The Foundation uses an impartial discount ranking system that maximizes benefits for the taxpayer. Bids are ranked and selected using the funding available for each year.

If a landowner's bid is selected for easement, the Foundation does not own the land, but rather purchases the landowner's development rights. Then a permanent agricultural conservation easement is placed on the property.

"Landowners who sell their development rights benefit by pulling value out of their land and receiving a payment now. This money can be reinvested in the farm operation or used to purchase more cropland," said Jimmy Kroon, Aglands Preservation Program Administrator. "On the other hand, some farmers preserve their farmland before passing it onto the next generation to ensure it will be farmed for the long run."

Delaware's statewide program made its first round of easement purchases in 1996 and has since preserved 22 percent of New Castle County farmland, 39 percent of Kent County farmland and 19 percent of Sussex County farmland.

For more information or to obtain applications related to the Delaware AgLands Preservation Program, interested landowners can visit https://agriculture.delaware.gov or call (302) 698-4530.

The Foundation's Board of Trustees includes representatives from agriculture and state agencies. Trustees are: Mark Collins, chairman; Bill Vanderwende, vice-chairman; L. Allen Messick Jr., treasurer; William H. "Chip" Narvel Jr., secretary; Secretary of Agriculture Michael T. Scuse; State Treasurer Colleen C. Davis; Secretary of Natural Resources and Environmental Control Shawn Garvin; Peter Martin; Theodore P. Bobola Jr.; Robert Emerson; and Janice Truitt.

###