

State Fair highlights Delaware's agriculture industry

More photographs from the 2018 Delaware State Fair are available on [Flickr](#).

DOVER, Del. – Many Delaware youth and adult exhibitors are ready to showcase their agricultural exhibits at this year's Delaware State Fair. Along with rides, food, and games, the state fair is a great opportunity for fair-goers to learn more about agriculture – Delaware's top industry.

"I encourage everyone to join our staff down at the Delaware State Fair – one of the best fairs in the United States – to learn about Delaware agriculture and all it does for our consumers and our economy," said Secretary of Agriculture Michael T. Scuse.

More than ninety-nine percent of Delaware's 2,500 farms are family-owned. Delaware farmers produce a variety of agricultural products on 500,000 acres of farmland, including corn, soybeans, wheat, poultry and livestock, and fruits and vegetables. All of the state's agricultural commodities can be experienced simply by visiting the barns and buildings along Holloway Street, from the front of the Fair by Quillen Arena all the way back to the 4-H/FFA Building (The Centre) and The Delmarva Building.

As a long-time participant at State Fair, Secretary Scuse offers this advice to newcomers attending this year:

"If you have never been to the Fair, you really need to step inside the 4-H/FFA Building to see



Members of the Delaware FFA Association join Secretary of Agriculture Michael T. Scuse, Delaware State Fair President Ron Draper, and other fair board members for a ribbon cutting to open the brand-new FFA AgVenture Exhibit.

how truly talented our young people involved in these organizations are. At some point, you are going to want to stop into the Department's Ag Commodities building to learn how to cook with Delaware Grown produce, try your hand at plowing a field on our interactive farm games, and talk with people who are involved in agriculture. Finally, walk through the livestock barns to see the wide variety of animals that our young people are showing. Take time to ask questions and learn where your food comes from. Getting to see a dairy cow up close helps make the connection that milk comes from a cow and doesn't start its journey to your table at the grocery store."

Attendees can also get a glimpse of the equine industry throughout Fair. Exhibitors will be participating in English and Western classes, showmanship, showing horses in hand, and driving. Harrington Raceway is one of three tracks in Delaware that offers horse racing. On Thursday, July 26, fair-goers are invited to attend harness racing in the M&T Bank Grandstand with a 7 p.m. post time. With more than \$550,000 in total purses, the race program will be headlined by four \$100,000 Delaware Standardbred Breeders Fund final events for 3-year-olds as well as program staples like the Governor's Cup, which features some of Delaware's top horses, ages three years and older. Governor John Carney will be on hand to present the trophy to the winner.

There is so much to see and do at State Fair, but do not let that be your only summer destination. More than 127,000 acres of farmland is permanently preserved throughout the state for future generations. Hop in the car and take a road trip to explore some of the quaint towns and villages to see the beauty agriculture brings to our landscape.

Take the opportunity to stop off at a local farmers' market or on-farm market where there is a variety of fruits and vegetables in-season. This is another opportunity to connect with Delaware family farmers that take pride in growing the freshest produce. There is nothing like getting sweet corn or a peach that was just picked first thing that morning and is in your hand to eat just a few hours later.

"We want to continue to build a connection between our family farmers and the residents and visitors who enjoy eating Delaware Grown produce," said DDA spokeswoman Stacey Hofmann. "I know I look forward to eating my share of fair food during the ten days, but including healthy food options in the mix is important to your well-being. Eating fresh fruit as a snack in between shows can help fuel your body. Try a light salad for lunch or dinner to stay refreshed during the hot days that we tend to experience during Fair."

Planning on purchasing fresh fruit and vegetables ahead of time or even stocking up mid-fair is as easy as clicking on <http://de.gov/buylocal> to find a local farmers' market or on-farm market. There will be plenty of Delaware-grown watermelon, peaches, berries, sweet corn, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, and more available in July. And if you are wondering what to make with all this good food, stop by the DDA Agricultural Commodities Building during fair to pick up our brand-new recipe collection.

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