

An affiliate of the  
American Soybean Assn.

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We represent the industry in Maryland,  
Delaware, Pennsylvania & New Jersey

# Mid-Atlantic SOYBEAN Association

**FILE COPY**  
**SUPPORT EXHIBIT**

*Received at Public Hearing  
2.23.2023*

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Sussex County Planning and Zoning Commission  
2 The Circle, PO Box 417  
Georgetown, DE 19947

Dear Planning Commission Members,

The Mid Atlantic Soybean Association is in full support of the rezoning request for Mountaire Farms of Delaware, Inc./Z 2003 KAR Farming Company, LLC.

Agricultural crop production in the Mid Atlantic States is dominated by the production of soybeans, corn and other feed grains. The Delmarva poultry companies are the primary purchasers of this production. In 2021 they purchased \$1.3 billion of soybeans, grain and other feed ingredients. There are nearly 1,400 farm families that contract to raise poultry on Delmarva and nearly 18,000 employees that work directly for the Delmarva poultry companies. The wholesale value of Delmarva poultry production in 2021 was \$4.2 billion.

While these numbers should be significant on their own, we would also point out the number of small businesses and workers that provide inputs and support services to the grain farmers, poultry farmers and poultry companies. A University of Delaware economic analysis confirmed that every dollar of direct revenue received by a Delaware farmer creates an additional \$8 or more of economic activity in our local communities. Agriculture is the largest economic driver to Sussex County and the State of Delaware.

Agriculture is also the least expensive type of economic activity for government entities to provide services to. This County and State has been blessed for centuries by the inspirational work ethic and dedication to community that is exhibited by the agrarian lifestyle and traditional values of its farmers. We contend that it should be very desirable to assure that agriculture may remain a viable pursuit for Sussex County residents. The greater the ability of our agricultural land to provide for our families, educate our children, support our community institutions, provide for our retirements and senior care, without expecting or needing support from government – the stronger our social fabric. And the less enticing that it is for the agricultural land to be converted to other uses that require greater services to be provided by government entities.

*MASA ... protecting the interests of soybean farmer-members in the Mid-Atlantic region.*

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This specific rezoning request will allow for Mountaire Farms to make a significant investment in the future of agriculture and poultry production in Sussex County and the surrounding Counties. The proposed feed mill project would include advanced state of the art technology in feed manufacturing. It would help to assure that our County and region could continue to maintain a competitive place within the domestic and world market of broiler production. It would relieve the pressure that is currently being placed upon older feed manufacturing facilities that may be nearing their end of useful life. It would provide for a substantial number of jobs during development and construction as well as provide for full-time skilled positions once the mill begins operations. The request for zoning change follows Sussex County's long-term comprehensive plan for future agricultural growth in that corridor and tracks the future land use map for these parcels. The intended project would be very compatible with surrounding land use.

We become extremely gratified and excited when we see agricultural companies such as Mountaire Farms willing to make investments such as this into long term infrastructure that may assure that we and future generations of farmers may continue to grow our industry. This rezoning change, once approved will provide additional significance as we celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the broiler industry that was born right here in Sussex County in 1923. Because of the resourceful innovation of Cecile Steele, a great lady farmer, we have the distinction of not just being the birthplace of meat bird chicken production, Sussex County continues to maintain its prominence as the number 1 broiler producing County in the USA. This request just makes good sense. We ask Sussex County as well as all other required authorities to approve this project, paving the way for a continued prosperous agricultural industry and related businesses for at least another 100 years.