



News from the Delaware Department of Agriculture

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Scuse and Hotchkiss receive 2012 Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service to Agriculture



2012 Secretary's Awards for Distinguished Service to Agriculture: (from left) Phyllis Hotchkiss joins her husband, 2012 Secretary's Award recipient Bruce Hotchkiss - Senior Editor of American Farm Publications, Delaware Secretary of Agriculture Ed Kee, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack, Patrice Scuse and her husband, 2012 Secretary's Award recipient Michael T. Scuse - USDA Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Senator Tom Carper, U.S. Senator Chris Coons, and U.S. Representative John Carney at the 41st Annual Agricultural Industry Dinner.

*Additional photos are at DDA's Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/AgricultureDE>
Photos of the press conference with Gov. Jack Markell, DDA Secretary Ed Kee and USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack are at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/delawaregovernor/sets/72157629046226517/>*

DOVER (Jan. 27, 2012) – Delaware Secretary of Agriculture Ed Kee presented the Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service to Michael T. Scuse, USDA Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Service, and Bruce Hotchkiss, Senior Editor for American Farm Publications, at the 41st Annual Agricultural Industry Dinner on Thursday, January 26, 2012. The annual awards recognize meritorious service to agriculture in Delaware and beyond.

Kee said, "I am recognizing two people who have demonstrated a major commitment to agriculture throughout their lives. They have each taken different paths on the way to building a lasting legacy that has made agriculture stronger here in Delaware, on the Delmarva Peninsula, nationally, and internationally. My predecessor, Michael Scuse chose the path of family agriculture and public service that has taken him from the fertile lands of the Leipsic/Smyrna/Woodland Beach area to the position of Delaware Secretary of Agriculture, 2001 – 2008, and now, USDA Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Service where he has primary responsibility over domestic programs including the Farm Services Agency and the Risk Management Agency. In this position, he also speaks before Congress on budgetary issues and travels the globe leading USDA trade missions breaking new ground in countries such as Vietnam and Peru."

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“Bruce Hotchkiss,” Kee continued, “chose the path of journalism that has taken him from a large farm family in Wisconsin to his family’s 1,000-acre Guernsey dairy farm in northern New Jersey to editorial and publishing positions on daily and weekly publications in New Jersey, Colorado, and Maryland. Today, he is senior editor of American Farm Publications, Inc. that publishes *The Delmarva Farmer* and other agricultural papers. He chose journalism as a career, but agriculture has always been his avocation. I am told that he rode a horse to his graduation in Rutgers stadium in 1951. My ultimate praise for Bruce is that throughout his excellent career in journalism, he has always fairly and without bias reported on issues facing agriculture and farmers, the backbone of American agriculture – no easy feat in light of today’s publicly perceived media bias across the board. His work exemplifies fairness, accuracy, honesty, and intelligence. Journalistic integrity, professionalism, and maintaining the public trust have always been the cornerstones of Bruce Hotchkiss’ career.”

“These two honorees continually contribute their own brand of personal and professional excellence to our agriculture industry, and for that we say ‘thank you,’” said Governor Jack Markell. “Agriculture employs thousands of people in Delaware and represents an important economic engine for our state and beyond. It needs the caliber of people like Michael Scuse and Bruce Hotchkiss.”

“Congratulations to Farm and Foreign Agricultural Service Under Secretary Michael Scuse and long-time agriculture journalist Bruce Hotchkiss on receiving the Outstanding Service to Delaware Agriculture award,” said U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “Both of these gentlemen have dedicated their careers to the advancement of agriculture in Delaware and beyond. I am grateful for their service and wish them all the best.”

In his remarks, Kee highlighted some of the many agricultural accomplishments of the awardees. For Michael Scuse, major accomplishments include:

- Development and implementation of an internationally recognized avian influenza response program as a result of an avian influenza outbreak in Delaware in 2004. His decisive leadership diverted a potential economic disaster for Delaware’s poultry industry, the linchpin of Delaware’s agricultural economy. DDA and the Delmarva Poultry Industry remain at the ready with nationally and internationally recognized plans and preparedness.
- Full implementation of Delaware’s nationally recognized Nutrient Management Program, a unique citizens’ alliance of public policy makers, conservation advocates, and agricultural stakeholders. The Program is taking a leading role in water quality initiatives in Delaware and the Mid-Atlantic region, to protect not only the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, but all of the watersheds in Delaware while recognizing the important contribution of agriculture to Delaware’s rich history and future quality of life.
- Permanent funding for Delaware’s nationally recognized Agricultural Lands Preservation Program and the development of a new Forestland Preservation program. His on-going dedication for aglands preservation was evidenced in 1996 when he and his family played a leading role with neighboring farmers to form one of the first agricultural districts, the Severson Neck District, in the then young Agricultural Lands Preservation Program. This district is still one of the largest area concentrations to come into the aglands preservation program.
- Re-establishing a Marketing Section at DDA, to improve market penetration locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Under Scuse, Delaware had a dramatic increase in farmers’ markets, an increase in assistance to help farmers sell to grocery chains, and in cooperation with the Delaware Office of International Trade, an increase in global trade missions.
- Quantification of Delaware’s Equine Industry through the 2004 Delaware Equine Study which determined that the industry contributes an estimated \$360 million to Delaware’s economy.
- Revitalization of Delaware’s racing industry. Both the Delaware Thoroughbred Racing Commission and the Delaware Harness Racing Commission came under the direct authority of the Department of Agriculture as of July 1, 2005. Each commission was allowed to employ an administrator. DDA and the racing industry protect racing consumers by maintaining a fair racing industry through accreditation of stewards, having the highest standards in forensic drug testing, and banning the use of anabolic steroids.

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- Serving as Vice-President of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), as Vice Chair of International Trade and Marketing for NASDA, and President of the Northeast Association of State Departments of Agriculture, positions that enhanced his understanding of issues facing agriculture in regional, national, and international arenas and helped pave the way for his current position.

For Bruce Hotchkiss, major accomplishments include:

- Sixty years of journalism excellence 1951 – present that includes:
 - Joining the staff of the former Newark Evening News in New Jersey that included three years as night police reporter.
 - A 10-year stint as editor of a large and award winning daily on the front range of the Rockies in Colorado.
 - Coming to the Eastern Shore as editor of The Star Democrat in 1977.
 - Being founding editor of the Central Shore Farmer, a small weekly insert, which he turned into a major agricultural newspaper, *The Delmarva Farmer*, in 1978. According to Bruce Hotchkiss, “It was the perfect wedding between the career I had chosen and the one very close to my heart that I had turned down when I chose not to inherit part of my family’s farm.”
 - Continuing as senior editor at American Farm Publications, Inc. today, a position in which he remains resolutely true to the original mission of *The Delmarva Farmer*, “to be a voice for farmers, not only across Delmarva but across the Mid-Atlantic.” He and the newspaper have received many tributes and honors. Some of Bruce’s are highlighted below:
 - The prestigious James Miller Award from the Maryland Grain Producers Association for “his fair and unbiased reporting of issues affecting the agricultural industry. This award recognizes a professional non-grower for contributions to the grain industry.
 - Honorary American Farmer Degree from FFA
 - Named an honorary County Ag Agent in Maryland, recognition that he holds especially dear.
 - Awards from the Soil Conservation Society of America, Maryland Extension Specialists Association, the University of Maryland Department of Agronomy, the Maryland 4-H Foundation, the Mid-Atlantic and Virginia Soybean Associations, the American Soybean Association and numerous others.
- Establishing and running a family business, Agri-Media Services Inc., a testament to his on-going commitment to agriculture and farmers. Agri-Media Services, Inc. offers help to farmers and farm organizations with their public and media relations and commodity promotion and education programs.

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