

CONFERENCE INTRODUCTION BY MICHAEL SCUSE

Good morning and welcome to the Carbon Sequestration on Farm and Forest Land Symposium as we explore trading offsets. I want to thank everyone here for your environmental concerns and efforts on behalf of our watersheds and air quality. As Governor Minner's representative here today, and as a Delaware farmer, I can speak to the commitment of the Minner Administration and the historical, current, and future actions of the Delaware agricultural community.

The members of Delaware's agricultural community, as good stewards of our natural resources, employ farmland and forestland preservation and best management practices (BMPs) to address water quality and other environmental concerns. The protection of our natural resources has been an ongoing effort by farmers and all agricultural interests long before it was a media and public concern.

The information gleaned today will help our farmers continue their on-going stewardship while at the same time help them economically. Forty six percent of Delaware land is farmland and thirty percent is forestland. We need to determine its potential to sequester carbon and how many metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents it represents. According to a May 2007 article in *The New York Times*, "An acre of pine forest captures and holds one to two metric tons of carbon dioxide per year, which it uses for photosynthesis. Untilled cropland holds a third of a ton of carbon per acre, and rangeland holds up to a fifth of a ton. The sequestered carbon dioxide is measured by soil tests before and after the planting." The article further says, "Carbon dioxide credits now [meaning in 2007] sell for about \$4 a metric ton. Mandatory restrictions, experts say, could increase the price to \$12 or higher. In Europe, the cost of a credit sold for sequestering carbon dioxide has reached \$20, and even \$30, a ton."

Many of our farmers are already using some conservation and best management practices that can provide salable credits, for example: conservation tillage, conservation or riparian buffers, grazing land management, nutrient management planning, using biodiesel. Also, the farmers that I know, including myself, are open to making cropping and/or land use changes that will increase their opportunity for salable credits. There are many forward looking, innovative farmers in Delaware. We will reach out to them about carbon sequestration and trading.

We can consider carbon storage to be a crop, a money maker. We can explore the possibility of forming groups or pools, as the National Carbon Offset Coalition does. The NCOC works with the Chicago Climate Exchange to trade carbon credits. Programs are purchasing and selling carbon credits that are created from sequestration activities, for example, in July of this year *Ag News for America* reported that the Farmers Union said that farmers enrolled in their 2006-2007 Carbon Credit Program will be getting their share of \$5.8 million this week. This is for land which implemented no-till cropping or was converted to grassland; it does not include forest land which Farmers Union says should be paid out later this year. The Farmers Union says 2.8 million acres are enrolled in the program nationwide and that offsets the estimated annual emissions of 320,000 automobiles.”

This effort will have to be a partnership with government agencies, industries, and individuals each doing their part to make this planet carbon neutral. Again, as a farmer, I will say agriculture will do its part; we just have to chart the way. I hope that today’s symposium will lead to the next administration appointing a Carbon Sequestration/Trading Task Force that will, among other things determine and/or develop:

- Delaware’s above and below ground carbon on farm and forest lands and ways to increase it through agricultural and forestry practices, management systems or land uses, and biofuels production that increase stored soil carbon (and/or offset greenhouse emissions).
- The potential for development of a system for carbon emissions trading or markets for Delaware carbon sequestered on agricultural and forest land.
- Which methods for measuring a modeling net carbon sequestration are applicable to Delaware agriculture.
- A Delaware version of the USDA’s OnePlan Conservation/Forest Management Planner that will guide our farmers and tree farmers through the development of their own conservation plans and forest management plans.”

All of our farmers are experienced nutrient management planners and this will certainly make it easier for them to develop a more inclusive conservation plan directed toward carbon sequestration and trading.

Again, thank you for being here.