

## **Governor Markell Celebrates New Jobs, Agricultural Industry in Sussex County**

*Mountaire Farms and Pinnacle Foods Expand in Delaware*

**MILLSBORO, Del.** (Nov. 4, 2010) – In an election season dominated by the topic of job creation, [Governor Jack Markell](#) and state officials marked Return Day with an announcement of new jobs and a commitment to the agricultural industry in Sussex County. Mountaire Farms will invest approximately \$34.5 million to expand its poultry complex in Millsboro and add 31 new jobs by December 2011. The job additions means Mountaire will now employ more than 3,600 people in Sussex County.

[Delaware Economic Development Office](#) Secretary Alan Levin and Department of Agriculture Secretary Ed Kee joined the Governor for the announcement.

“What Delaware does best is come together to make a difference on what matters most – and what matters most is jobs and improving people’s quality of life. It’s fitting that just a few hours before and just a few miles away from where people will, at Return Day, literally bury the hatchet and move past the political season, we’re together to talk about jobs,” Markell said. “Mountaire is a critical part of our state’s economy and we are so glad to see their strong commitment to this community renewed.”

The expansion is the construction of a new state-of-the-art Resource Recovery Center, which will recover unused protein from current operations for use in the manufacture of commercial pet food. New technology equipment will reduce manufacturing-related odor at the plant. Plans to replace oil with natural gas and to upgrade the waste water treatment facility will also reduce environmental impacts on the water and air at the site.

“Support for the Resource Recovery Plant project is paramount in solidifying Mountaire’s total integration poultry business in Delaware,” said Paul Downes, president of Mountaire Farms.

The Delaware Economic Development Office has offered a \$787,500 grant from the Delaware [Strategic Fund](#) to assist with the development and construction of the new facility. The grant is conditioned on the Mountaire capital investment at the site, as well as upgrades to an existing waste water treatment facility. The grant must also be approved by the Council on Development Finance.

“The state’s support of this expansion would continue our commitment to this important sector of our economy, while helping to create jobs and make improvements to the environment. It is a solid investment in the future of our state,” said Levin.

The grant would be the state’s second investment in Sussex County’s agricultural industry in just a few months. In August, DEDO awarded a \$90,000 grant to Pinnacle Foods to expand their Vlasic pickle processing facility in Millsboro. Due to the age of the facility, Pinnacle’s review of their options for the future of the plant included closing it and moving all production to Michigan. The state’s investment supports part of the company’s total capital project costs to modernize the facility. It will help the company reach quality and service standards required by a retail customer and ensure this product exported around the country will continue to be made in Delaware.

“Mountaire deserves our sincerest congratulations and gratitude for the commitment they are making to Delaware, Sussex County and to the poultry industry. The Resource Recovery Center is a great example of addressing environmental issues and creating new business opportunities with a singular plan. I also thank Governor Markell and my cabinet colleague, Secretary Levin, for their continuing impressive support for Delaware’s agriculture and the poultry industry,” said Kee.

Agriculture contributes \$337 million to Delaware’s Gross Domestic Product and represents a 6.8 percent annual growth rate over a 10-year period (1997 -2007). According to the 2007 U.S. Census of Agriculture, there are nearly 2,500 farms in Delaware. There are also about 65 food manufacturing companies in Delaware, employing more than 9,000 Delawareans.

For more information about [jobs](#) at Mountaire Farms in Delaware, visit [www.mountaire.com](http://www.mountaire.com).

#### **About the Delaware Economic Development Office**

The Delaware Economic Development Office is an executive state agency responsible for attracting new investors and businesses to the state, promoting the expansion of existing industry, assisting small and minority-owned businesses, promoting and developing tourism and creating new and improved employment opportunities for all citizens of the State. Visit [dedo.delaware.gov](http://dedo.delaware.gov).

Contact:

Nikki Lavoie, Delaware Economic Development Office  
[Nikki.Lavoie@state.de.us](mailto:Nikki.Lavoie@state.de.us)  
302-233-8692

Anne Fitzgerald, Department of Agriculture  
[Anne.Fitzgerald@state.de.us](mailto:Anne.Fitzgerald@state.de.us)  
302-242-4092

###