

In Focus

In Focus: It's New!

In Focus, Vision for Illinois Agriculture's (VIA) new periodic electronic newsletter, will keep you up-to-speed on VIA developments, and help your organization provide input to gain benefit throughout Illinois agriculture. Add our address to your email software to ensure consistent delivery! Please forward this newsletter to colleagues, or add addresses to the mailing list by emailing diplacid@iffb.org.

The Illinois Agriculture Vision

To create the most profitable and vibrant portfolio of food and agricultural outcomes through an optimized food and agriculture system that supports rapid innovation and commercialization, embraces change, acts as a catalyst in collaboration, and commits to global leadership and sustainability.

The following represent the three goals for the future of the Illinois food and agriculture industry:

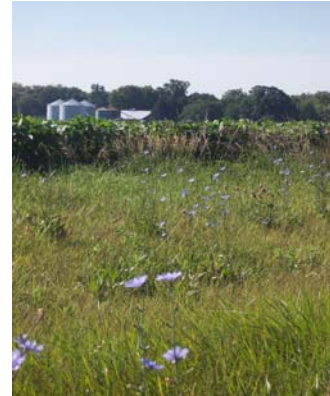
- Grow agricultural production and exports to a top three ranking in the United States through the growth of both commodity and value added production
- Enable food manufacturing growth to a top three ranking in the United States through rapid innovation and commercialization of new food products and technologies
- Lead the United States as the renewable energy and alternative energy leader through the adoption of new renewable energy technologies and growth of renewable energy production

Five strategic themes that command attention have been established in order to accomplish the established goals.

- Attract the Necessary Human and Capital Resources to Support Initiatives Aimed at Growing the Food and Agriculture Industries
- Create a Favorable Business Environment to Nurture Economic Development in the State
- Improve Community Vitality
- Advance Intellectual and Innovation Resources
- Act as a Catalyst in Collaboration and Partnerships to Grow and Sustain the Food and Agriculture Industries



February 2008



Vision for Illinois Agriculture aims to make more—jobs, income and opportunities—by expanding Illinois agriculture.

Strategy in Action

Representatives of Illinois food and agriculture organizations and industries have been working to develop a long-range vision. Over the past several months, a planning team has met and outlined a vision statement, goals, and strategic themes (see left). Teams met Feb. 5-7, 2008, to develop implementation strategies for Food Manufacturing, Agricultural Production, and Alternative Bio-based Outcomes (Renewable Energy).

Over the three days, a diverse group of participants actively discussed and prioritized realistic initiatives for both short-term success and longer-term development. Session facilitator John Demerly, ABG, Inc., said the excitement generated by the participants, especially those new to the process, creates the momentum needed to

The Spirit of Collaboration

The efforts of Vision for Illinois Agriculture create a vision for the future of Illinois agriculture so industry stakeholders can collectively work to implement this plan. An inclusive process has brought together all segments of the Illinois agriculture industry, ensuring success for the project.

"Working collaboratively is important to help us all understand this puzzle that is Illinois agriculture, and then what role each participant plays in helping to achieve the vision," said John Demerly, ABG, Inc., and member of the coordinating committee.

Tom Carper, West Central Region Manager for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and planning team member, said collaboration is critical.

"Great discoveries and improvements invariably involve the cooperation of many minds." Alexander Graham Bell, Inventor (1847-1922)

"Implementation teams composed of a larger group of stakeholders in the industry will continue to identify and prioritize strategies and initiatives that support the vision," Carper said.

For Illinois farmers, it is a critical time to be involved in planning for the future.

"The Vision is important for farmers because we're in a very volatile business" says Stephen Scates, a Shawneetown farmer who represents the Council for Food and Agricultural Research. "To stay on top of technology, we'll have to look to the future. We have to make sure our education and research keeps us on the cutting edge".

And what is good for the whole of Illinois agriculture is also good for the businesses, organizations and agencies involved in the process.

Bunge North America is a leader in the North American food supply chain and a member of the planning team. Doug McNeely, Center Gulf Regional Manager for Bunge North America's Grain Business Unit, said: "We're committed to quality, innovation and looking for better ways to give our customers a competitive edge. With grain elevators, an oilseed processing facility, an edible oil refinery and packaging plant and a corn dry mill located in Illinois, we want to work with industry partners, farm and commodity groups, educational institutions and other organizations to enhance and grow the competitiveness of the Illinois food and fiber industry. We believe the Vision for Illinois Agriculture project is the perfect forum in which to accomplish this goal, and it's vital to a vibrant agricultural industry in Illinois."



keep the process moving forward. He said that four to five initiatives will be announced soon that can be implemented immediately in order to support the five strategic themes.

"Illinois can capitalize on its strengths and resources—the proximity of large urban areas, partnerships among businesses, organizations, and agencies within and outside the state, and its leadership in agriculture and higher education—in order to lead the nation, lead the world in food and agriculture production," Demerly said.

Learn More!

For more information about the Illinois Agriculture Vision, please visit our website at www.illinoisagriculturevision.org.

Vision Sponsors

Primary Sponsors

Illinois Farm Bureau
Illinois Corn Marketing Board
Archer Daniels Midland

Secondary Sponsors

1st Farm Credit Services
Bunge North America, Inc.
Farm Credit Service of Illinois
GROWMARK, Inc.
iBIO Institute
Illinois Agri-Women
Illinois Department of Agriculture
Illinois Soybean Association
Monsanto
University of Illinois

Donors

Illinois Beef Association
Illinois Pork Producers
Illinois State University
Illinois Council on Food and Agricultural Research (C-FAR)
Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives
Illinois Green Industry Association

To remove your name from our mailing list, please email diplacid@ilfb.org.

Questions or comments? E-mail us at CMagnuson@ilfb.org or call 309-557-3144.