FARM Illinois: A Food and Agriculture RoadMap for Illinois
A major initiative developed over several years to re-imagine the future of agriculture and food in Illinois and assure its global leadership in food and agriculture.
“Develop a comprehensive strategic plan to enable Illinois and the Chicago region to become the leading global hub for food and agriculture system innovation and ensure their leadership in sustainably meeting the 21st-century challenge of global and local food security.”
WHAT MAKES FARM ILLINOIS UNIQUE?

• First coordinated, systemwide effort in Illinois to bring together Illinois’ food, agriculture, and business networks

• Clear, actionable items to position the state as a regional, national, and global hub for food and agriculture activities and leader in addressing global and regional food insecurity
THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ILLINOIS

Geography
• Centrally located in the Midwest
• Major transportation hub

Among the world’s most fertile and productive regions
• 3rd in the U.S. (total acres of prime farmland)
• 1st for soybean production and processed food sales
• 2nd for corn production
• 4th for hog inventory and sales

Chicago
• Global magnet for business and trade
• Employment in food processing and manufacturing second largest in US
• Home to ADM, ConAgra, Kraft-Heinz, Mondelez, McDonald’s

Academics
• World-leading research institutions in Biotechnology and agroecology
CHALLENGES AHEAD

• New global competition and feeding 9.7 billion people by 2050
• Changing consumer preferences and regulatory standards
• Lack of statewide leadership to bridge the “I-80” divide
• Difficult business environment
• Declining R+D investments
• Needed efforts to educate the public
• Developing, attracting, and retaining a qualified food and ag workforce
• Need for enhanced programs, best practice adoption, and long term planning for resource management
• Underinvestment in physical infrastructure
• Low visibility of Illinois food and agriculture
FUNDERS AND SUPPORT

Primary funder:

Additional supporters and funders:
LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Robert A. Easter, PhD
Chairman
President Emeritus, University of Illinois

Gary Ash
CEO, 1st Farm Credit Services

Richard Guebert
President, Illinois Farm Bureau

Ivo H. Daalder
President, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

Tom Livingston
Regional Vice President, Midwest Government Affairs, CSX Transportation

Adele Simmons
President, Global Philanthropy Partnership

Janet Mathis
Executive Director, Renew Moline

David Miller
President Emeritus, iBIO®/iBIO Institute

Theresa Mintle
President and CEO, Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce

Marc Schulman
President, Eli’s Cheesecake Company

Alejandro Silva
President and CEO, Evans Food Group
THE PLAN

• A roadmap for coordination to unleash Illinois’ potential

• Developed to bolster the state’s economic, ecological, and social sustainability

• Ensures sustained and innovative statewide leadership across the entire food and agriculture system

• 23 actionable items in six key areas
LEADERSHIP FOR INNOVATION

GOAL
Develop an integrated, statewide, long-term, public-private strategy for achieving the goals of FARM Illinois.

Strategies
**Establish** the Illinois Council for Food and Agriculture to spearhead ongoing strategic development and implementation of FARM Illinois

**Host** a Global Food and Agriculture Symposium starting in 2018 to establish Chicago and Illinois as global leaders in addressing 21st-century food and agriculture issues

**Promote** food and agriculture system innovation through multidisciplinary research and policy development

**Support** initiatives to strengthen the roles played by the Chicago region and the State of Illinois in local and regional food and agriculture systems

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

GOAL
Spur business growth and investment by making Illinois the preferred destination for food and agriculture companies of all sizes.

Strategies
**Improve** the state’s business climate to attract, nurture, and retain farmers and food and agriculture companies

**Expand** financing opportunities and information for farmers and entrepreneurs throughout the food and agriculture system

**Develop** a succession planning strategy to retain talent and economic activity in farms and communities throughout the state

**Establish** and enhance food and agriculture clusters across the state

**Support** entrepreneurs and attract investment to food and agriculture
**WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION**

**GOAL**
Develop a high-quality workforce for food and agriculture and educate Illinois policy makers and the general public on sector innovation.

**Strategies**
- **Ensure** that Illinois’ labor pool is sufficient to serve the food and agriculture system
- **Increase** the emphasis on food and agriculture in primary and secondary education
- **Establish** a higher-education food and agriculture consortium to attract the best student talent, strengthen programs, and eliminate duplication
- **Build** awareness of Illinois’ food and agriculture system

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**RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

**GOAL**
Ensure that Illinois is sustainably protecting and managing its natural resources.

**Strategies**
- **Support** existing efforts to encourage sustainable production, increase resilience to climate change, and reduce nutrient runoff
- **Demonstrate** demand for existing Federal Farm Bill programs and establish new farm protection programs to preserve farmland
- **Reduce** significant waste streams all along the food and agriculture system value chain, including cutting the amount of food waste from farm to fork
- **Promote** renewable energy development and energy-saving efficiencies
**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**GOAL**
Ensure Illinois’ infrastructure is capable of supporting the state’s ability to sustainably meet its own needs while being a global leader in food and agriculture.

**Strategies**
- **Improve** resource allocation by adopting a comprehensive, intermodal, and multijurisdictional approach to planning and investment
- **Modernize** transportation infrastructure vital to agriculture and food distribution
- **Promote** the growth and development of the region’s transportation and logistics business sector
- **Enable** every household and business in the state to connect to broadband service

**BRANDING AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT**

**GOAL**
Develop larger and more diverse local, regional, national, and international markets for Illinois’ agriculture and food products by raising Illinois’ profile.

**Strategies**
- **Raise** Illinois’ profile to boost domestic markets and increase exports for the full range of food and agriculture products
- **Create** an Illinois “brand,” inclusive of the food and agriculture system, and implement a strategic marketing plan
WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- Illinois will be the world’s most admired and sought-after destination for food and agriculture businesses from around the world.

- Food and agriculture in Illinois will increase its contribution to the state’s economy, creating thousands of new jobs for its residents and attracting highly qualified workers to the state.

- Illinois will be the global pacesetter for basic and applied research in food and agriculture through innovations drawn from bioscience, digital technology, agroecology, and other fields.

- Illinois farmers and food businesses will expand their already substantial role in global food security through innovation that increases yields, enhances nutrition, conserves resources, and adapts to the changing climate.

- Illinois’ regional and local food and agriculture systems, especially that of the Chicago metropolitan region, will be among the most diverse and vibrant of any area in the world, set new standards for how food and agriculture can improve health and the environment, and help underserved communities thrive.

- Illinois’ agriculture infrastructure will be among the best in the world, employing new technologies and creative financing to become a global model.
THE FOUR C’s of FARM ILLINOIS

CONVENE
Enable system-wide collaboration among Council members and partners in order to develop and effectively utilize Illinois’ distinct advantages to the fullest extent.

CONNECT
Foster public-private partnerships that will allow Illinois the ability to unlock the full potential of the food and agriculture system in the state.

CATALYZE
Drive and implement recommendations that will optimally position Illinois as the global leader in food and agriculture system innovation while growing the economy, supporting community health, and sustaining the environment.

CHAMPION
Celebrate Illinois’ vibrant food and agriculture system by disseminating information that creates understanding and appreciation of the importance of the sector and advocating for polices that will enhance sector achievements throughout the state.
NEXT STEPS

Short-term
• Establish the permanent FARM Illinois body

Medium- and Long-term
• Begin implementation of the plan
• Begin work on the 2018 Global Food and Agriculture Symposium and lead-up events.
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