

THE FARMER'S REPORT

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Illinois Soybean Association launches SoyInnovator website

BLOOMINGTON – The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) recently launched a new website dedicated to bringing innovation, technology and science to Illinois farmer audiences. SoyInnovator is an online resource designed to provide growers, and the industry that supports them, with data-driven news and reviews in a way that inspires continual improvement on the farm through the adoption of new practices and technology.

Because science and technology are continually evolving and for soybean farmers to remain competitive, the path forward depends on how they prepare. The research discoveries happening today will transform into a new way of doing business in the future. SoyInnovator focuses on what growers need to know, joining ISA's suite of farmer-facing media properties including Illinois Field & Bean magazine and IL.SoyAdvisor platform which offers actionable, year-long agronomic advice.

"Today's farmers are more tech savvy and motivated by emerging innovations that benefit the industry, the environment, and their bottom line," says ISA Chairman and Illinois soybean farmer, Steve Pitstick. "SoyInnovator will enable farmers of the future to become more efficient and better informed, to improve tomorrow's yields, and to be ready for what's next in Illinois agriculture."

Visit SoyInnovator and subscribe to the newsletter at IL.SoyInnovator.org.

The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) checkoff and membership programs represent more than 43,000 soybean farmers in Illinois. The checkoff funds market development and utilization efforts while the membership program supports the government relations interests of Illinois soybean farmers at the local, state, and national level, through the Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG). ISA upholds the interests of Illinois soybean producers through promotion, advocacy, and education with the vision of becoming a market leader in sustainable soybean production and profitability. For more information, visit the website www.ilsoy.org and ilsoygrowers.com.



Tows, which often move 45-60 barges at a time, currently are restricted to 25 barges at a 9-foot depth. (Photo by Alexis Burnett, Pulaski-Alexander Farm Bureau)

Efforts intensify to keep barges rolling on Mississippi River

By DANIEL GRANT
FarmWeek

The traffic jam on the Mississippi River caused by some of the lowest water levels in a decade will likely continue near term.

About 200 boats and 3,000 barges on the lower Mississippi River were delayed at different points of the waterway mid-October, according to the U.S. Coast Guard.

What does that mean to farmers and others who depend on barges to ship or receive products? Like many of the other supply chain issues the past couple years, expect slower shipping times and higher prices to move commodities.

"It's a big-time disruption in the supply chain," said Paul Rohde, vice president of the Waterways Council, a trade association for river navigation interests. "The impact is pretty severe for barge transportation."

Tows, which often move 45 to 60 barges at a time, currently are restricted to 25 barges at a 9-foot depth, as previously reported in FarmWeek. And tonnage per barge has been reduced due to low water levels.

As a result, the cost to ship a ton of corn or soybeans down the river jumped from \$29 in early September and \$50 by Sept. 27 to more than \$105 by mid-October, Rohde reported.

"Forty percent of the world's food supply comes from the Mississippi River basin," Rohde said. "This is a global crisis we could be looking at if the river level doesn't raise in the next month."

In the meantime, efforts ramped up in recent weeks to keep barge traffic rolling on the river. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deployed dredges that are working in 12-hour shifts and it's doing survey work to look for other methods to ease the issues.

"The good news is the industry is resilient from an operational standpoint and working to make sure navigation continues and, more importantly, it's safe navigation," Rohde said. "With all the challenges, it (river transportation) is still the best way to move products north and south."

"This really harkens back to 2012, when we had the last real low water crisis (on the Mississippi)," he noted. "A decade ago, we had rock pinnacles to remove. We don't have anything like that at this point, it's just a matter of low river levels due to a lack of rainfall."

The Mississippi River collects water from about two-thirds of the country, according to Rohde. But 81% of the continental U.S. was abnormally dry or in a drought as of mid-October, up from 68.7% three months ago, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

Recent low water levels surpassed some of the key milestones during the 2012 drought. But the lowest mark on the river of the past generation for navigation purposes remains 1988 when tows were restricted to 16 barges at a 9-foot depth, according to Rohde.

Farmers and grain handlers have responded to the situation with alternative storage or transportation plans.

"We haul all our grain to an inland elevator," said Brent Clair, a farmer from Loraine (Adams County), not far from the Mississippi River at Quincy. "They're hauling more further inland rather than going to the river."

Ken Taake, who farms in Ullin (Pulaski County), near the convergence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, reported both river terminals in his area stopped taking corn and soybean shipments for a day and were limited to contracted grain for additional days, as of Oct. 17.

"The low river levels have been playing havoc with local markets," Taake said. "Even when (local terminals) have been buying grain, the basis has been terrible."

(This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.)

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Happy Thanksgiving!

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Land eligible for WRE includes farmed or converted wetlands previously altered for agricultural production that can be successfully and cost-effectively restored.

Wetland Reserve Easement sign-up set for FY 2023

CHAMPAIGN —Ivan Dozier, State Conservationist, announced the application period for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE). The purpose of the Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) program is to help landowners enhance and protect habitat for wetland wildlife on their lands, reduce impacts from flooding, recharge groundwater, provide outdoor recreation, and increase habitat for migratory waterfowl.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) wants landowners and farmers to know that "The first application cut-off date for fiscal year 2023 has been established," Dozier explains. "We accept applications for Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) year-round. Applications NRCS receives that meet program eligibility by Dec. 23, 2022 will be the first to be considered for funding in our 2023 program."

According to Dozier, land eligible for WRE includes farmed or converted wetlands previously altered for agricultural production that can be successfully and cost-effectively restored. NRCS prioritizes applications based on the easement's potential for im-

proving water quality and protecting and enhancing habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife. To enroll land through this program, NRCS enters into an agreement with eligible private landowners to secure an easement on their property.

Working with landowners, NRCS also develops a wetland restoration plan to restore, enhance, and protect wetland functions and values on their easement acres. NRCS works with the landowner on every step of the acquisition and restoration process.

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance directly to private landowners to restore, protect and enhance wetlands through the purchase of these easements. Eligible landowners can choose to enroll in either a permanent or a 30-year easement. Applications for ACEP-WRE are continuous and can be submitted at any time. For FY 2023, Illinois NRCS has received \$3.5 million in funding.

To apply for a wetland easement through ACEP - WRE, visit NRCS at your local USDA Service Center.

Find more information about ACEP and other NRCS conservation programs in Illinois on the new IL NRCS website: www.il.nrcs.usda.gov.

Illinois secures \$13.3 million in new funding to support conservation planning

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) announced the approval of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (NLRs) and Conservation Planning Assistance grant agreement.

The IDOA/NRCS partnership leverages \$3.5 million Illinois state NLRs funds with \$9.8 million of federal funds from the USDA/NRCS to deliver over \$13.3 million in new funding to support conservation planning and NLRs staffing and programming.

The project will allow the addition of up to 40 conservation planners across the state of Illinois. The conservation planners will be recruited and supervised by IDOA and hired by a subcontract hiring agent the Sangamon County Soil and Water Conservation District. The conservation planners will increase Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) technical assistance for planning, implementation, and maintenance. They will increase capacity to develop new conservation plans and to conduct conservation implementation follow-up to improve conservation successes.

"This historic funding increases investments in agricultural conservation and nutrient management rest on human capacity," said Governor J.B. Pritzker. "Illinois like other states across the nation have noted, we need strong individual, organizational and societal capacity to design and implement conservation measures, adapt them and sustain their impact over time."

"Governor Pritzker and the Illinois legislature

have taken an important, momentous step towards reducing nutrient losses across Illinois' 27 million acres," said IDOA Director Jerry Costello. "From increased human capacity, to supporting healthy farmland and conservation initiatives, to cost-share programs like the fall covers for spring savings cover crop program, the Illinois Department of Agriculture stands ready to serve the states over 72,000 producers with significant leveraged resources to continue to lead the charge."

The conservation planners will also support the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (NLRs) efforts as the latest bi-annual report indicates an increase in overall nutrients being lost to Illinois streams and rivers. In addition, the new planners will be able to assist with the IDOA conservation programs to increase overall producer opportunities to participate in State and Federal conservation programs.

"NRCS is pleased to be a part of this partnership effort to get more technical boots on the ground in

Illinois," said Ivan Dozier, USDA-NRCS State Conservationist. "It's great to be able to work together on strategic solutions that better prepare Illinois farmers to address these increasing resource concerns and take advantage of conservation practice implementation funding that will be coming our way."

"The Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts commends Governor Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Agriculture for taking the initiative to use existing state funding resources to leverage additional federal funding resources," said Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts Executive Director Grant Hammer.

Through this partnership with the USDA NRCS conservation programs, Illinois producers and landowners will have increased opportunities to improve their nutrient management planning, advance soil health and contribute to the reduction in nutrient losses to Illinois streams, rivers and lakes.



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Demand for beef, pork expected to grow



U.S. beef and pork exports reached a record \$18.7 billion in 2021 and could push \$20 billion this year.

By DANIEL GRANT
FarmWeek

Jeff Simmons, president and CEO of Elanco Animal Health, believes plant-based meat will have its place in the market for years to come.

But it certainly doesn't appear to be a major threat to the livestock industry at the checkout aisle.

Simmons projects worldwide demand for animal protein will continue to grow. And, he believes the livestock industry is poised to help address some of the world's top challenges, including hunger.

"The three big issues right now are food insecurity, a global health crisis and climate," Simmons said during the Agri-Pulse Ag Outlook Forum in Kansas City on Sept. 26. "Animals are connected to all three. I believe they're the miss-

The U.S. could see even stronger demand for red meat as the world's top exporter of pork, the European Union, is projected to reduce output this year by nearly 5% due to disease outbreaks in its herd and policy to reduce animal numbers on farms.

ing piece to some of the world's biggest problems right now."

About 60% of consumers around the world aren't getting enough calories, leading to food insecurity, or they're getting the wrong calories, which is contributing to health issues, according to Simmons.

Boosting animal protein output addresses both those issues by reducing food insecurity and increasing the availability of healthy protein choices.

"Animal protein is one of the hottest food segments the last three years, with 50% growth the last 10 years," Simmons said. "You can't disconnect consumer choice, calories or the climate."

Sales of plant-based meat, conversely, could stay flat through 2022 and remain about 1% of the total protein market through 2027, according to Simmons.

Top consumer preferences when choosing their protein include taste, cost and nutrition, he noted.

"Consumers are starting to vote (at the food checkout lane)," Simmons said. "Meat is on demand."

Erin Borrer, vice president of economic analysis for the U.S. Meat Export Federation, noted U.S. beef and pork exports reached a record \$18.7 billion in 2021 and could push \$20 billion this year.

"Beef exports have surpassed \$1 billion six of the

last seven months. It really has been demand driven," Borrer said. "We have lots of opportunities."

The U.S. could see even stronger demand for red meat as the world's top exporter of pork, the European Union, is projected to reduce output this year by nearly 5% due to disease outbreaks in its herd and policy to reduce animal numbers on farms.

"It's critical to have a diverse export base," said Borrer, who noted U.S. farmers must be proactive to maintain their premier animal health status. "That's part of what continues to offer us opportunities as we look ahead."

Simmons also views climate challenges as an opportunity for the livestock industry.

"With a carbon market, it increases opportunities for ag," he said. "Climate-neutral cattle farms are achievable by 2030."

But to get there, he said farmers must do more than tell their story.

"We need action plans on farms," he said. "Climate-neutral farming can happen. I see us changing the game."

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No single source for farm injury, fatality data

By **TIMOTHY EGGERT**
FarmWeek

Calculating the number of severe injuries and fatalities surrounding agriculture in Illinois is largely yeoman's work because there is no single government agency report or public database that tracks and compiles the incidents.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration through its Fatality Analysis Reporting Systems releases annual data on deaths that occur on roadways, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics through its Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries each year publishes data on workplace deaths by industry.

Both reports code for deaths related to farm equipment and industries that relate to agriculture, but often lag a year or two behind and don't capture every incident.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration provides annual reports on non-fatal, severe injuries stemming from employers within the ag industry. But those reports are self-surveys and remain specific to companies with 10 or more employees, meaning most farm operations are not required to report a severe injury that takes place.

An online repository of news reports of farm fatalities and severe injuries has been managed since 2015 by the National Farm Medicine Center at the Marshfield Clinic Research Institute.

The Purdue University Space Agricultural Confined Site Incident Database since 2012 has tracked by year the number of fatal and non-fatal incidents around grain bins and other confined spaces.

While the latter two are credible sources, they also rely on self-reporting and other aggregators of the data.

The issue compounds further for non-fatal injuries, news of which usually doesn't make it off the farm unless public safety agencies release information.

"For non-fatal incidents, it's a lot trickier," said Salah Issa, an assistant professor at the University of Illinois who specializes in agricultural and industrial safety and health.

"At this moment we are not as certain what the trends are," Issa said. "It's a lot harder to capture non-fatal injuries, ...so that's one area of research that we're trying to explore and better understand."

To get there, Issa has been cataloging fatal and non-fatal data through the government reports, news stories and other channels, like death certificates. His goal is to create an online dashboard showing incident data at the county level.

"My ultimate goal is bringing farm injuries and



Combines and other equipment are rolling across Illinois as farmers take to the field for harvest. Motorists should be on the lookout for slow moving vehicles and other large harvesting equipment this fall. (File photo by Illinois Farm Bureau photographer Catrina Rawson)

deaths into the hands of people who need them," Issa said, noting that while studies and reports are interesting to academics, they're "not actionable for communities that are impacted by these incidents."

Armed with regional

data on farm injuries, Issa said entities like health departments, county Farm Bureaus and local governments could then take action to address trends.

That action could take shape in several ways.

"It could be more that this

county or this region needs more safety training; it could be that it's just the equipment; it could be that you need standards; it could be that you need regulations; it could be that it needs policy changes," Issa said. "But to start all the action, you need

to raise awareness."

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Illinois secures \$14.4 million to provide new markets for underserved farmers

SPRINGFIELD - The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) and Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) worked jointly to secure United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funding that provides new opportunities for underserved farmers and communities. The Local Food Purchasing Cooperative Agreement (LFPA) will allow the State of Illinois to purchase produce, proteins and fresh processed foods directly from underserved farmers at fair market value. Food will then be distributed to communities in need, including schools, non-profits and the food bank system.

State-wide partners will convene in year one of the program to develop an implementation plan, taking into consideration the needs of underserved farmers and communities not traditionally served through food distribution networks. This planning process will also examine how culturally appropriate fresh foods can be made more accessible to food insecure communities.

Year two of the program

will begin with a Notice of Funding Opportunity for the issuance of sub-awards for management of multiple state-wide aggregate sites. These sites will serve as collection centers for products from underserved farmers. Each awarded aggregation site will be responsible for engaging with underserved farmers, purchasing food, tracking metrics, packaging product, transporting product and ensuring equitable distribution of these products to underserved communities throughout Illinois.

"I'm grateful to the USDA for their partnership with IDHS and IDOA in creating a creative, coordinated program like the Local Food Purchasing Cooperative Agreement," said Governor JB Pritzker. "This program will support local farmers and those struggling with food insecurity, creating a system where Illinoisans in the public and private sectors can work with the federal government to help each other and benefit from our abundant natural resources."

"Being hungry is a reality for far too many people in this country and in our state. That is why Illinois is using creative resourcing and dedicated collaboration with stakeholders to fight food insecurity," said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. "The Local Food Purchasing Cooperative Agreement will provide fresh, nutrient-dense food to those in need—and in the process uplift many who feed and grow Illinois. By buying from underserved farmers, this agreement supports a community of growers who have been neglected for far too long. We know that Ag connects us all best when we work together to end hunger."

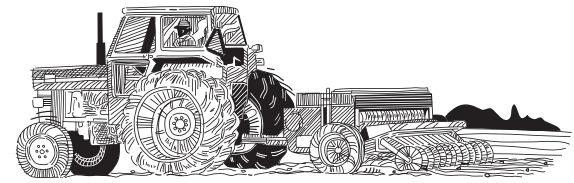
"This cooperative agreement is an opportunity to unite Illinoisans invested in building a resilient food system and develop a collaborative network of food system support," said IDOA Director Jerry Costello.

"We envision an Illinois where no one is without food — where all children have access to nutritious, appealing meals at school and at home, and where

families in every rural and urban community have access to quality, affordable food. We envision an Illinois where people do not have to choose between paying a medical bill or putting food on the table, and where limited mobility doesn't prevent older adults or people with disabilities from having a nutritious meal. We envision an Illinois where the color of your skin, your citizenship status, or the zip code where you live do not make you more or less likely to be food insecure," said Grace B. Hou, Secretary, Illinois Department of Human Services.

"Promoting economic equity in food access and agriculture has been among my top priorities as a legislator," said State Representative Sonya Harper. "Millions in federal funding for the purchase of healthy foods from underserved farmers is a fantastic development, and I applaud ISDA, USDA and the Governor for making this happen."

For more information on the Local Food Purchasing Agreement, please email agr.lfpa@illinois.gov.



Farmers, ranchers and farm workers can find ag-related tax info anytime on IRS.gov

The IRS website has a wealth of information for farmers, ranchers and other farm workers. Whether they've got a question about whether crop insurance is taxable, they need to find financial resources for a small business, or they want to learn about industry trends, the IRS.gov can help get them answers.

Here are a few webpages on IRS.gov that may be useful to farmers and other taxpayers in the ag industry:

- Forms and publications to help farmers

This webpage has a variety of tax forms and publications of interest to farmers. They can find information about how federal tax laws apply to farming, filing requirements and return forms, accounting periods and methods, farm income and expenses and much more.

- Financial resources for small businesses

This page links business owners to many commonly-used financial resources for small businesses, from the Small Business Administration, to Farm Service Agency and others.

- Agriculture trends and statistics

Keeping on top of industry trends is an important part of any business. This page provides industry-specific and general survey results that may be of interest to the small business owner.

- Tax relief after natural disasters

Drought, fire and flooding can hit farming operations hard. After a natural disaster, taxpayers can find information on the most recent tax relief provisions for taxpayers affected by disaster situations. People can also refer to the FAQs for Disaster Victims for more information.

The IRS Agriculture Tax Center is a great resource for tax info, forms and ag-related tips, including topics like:

- *How to treat crop insurance and crop disaster payments
- *Tax rules for foreign agricultural workers employees
- *If commodity credit corporation loans count as income
- *How to deduct expenses for soil or water conservation

Share this tip on social media -- #IRSTaxTip: Farmers, ranchers and farm workers can find ag-related tax info anytime on IRS.gov. <http://ow.ly/rPZc50Li2uw>

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NRCS: 2023 RCPP application cutoff dates set for Working Lands, Water and Wildlife Partnership

CHAMPAIGN — State Conservationist Ivan Dozier announced that the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will offer Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) funding for the Working Lands, Water and Wildlife Partnership throughout Illinois. Illinois NRCS has partnered with The Conservation Fund to help producers address resource concerns such as inadequate habitat for wildlife, water quality, and long-term protection of farmland.

Landowners can apply for assistance through RCPP to implement practices, such as silvopasture establishment, tree/shrub establishment, and cover crops. Landowners can also receive a rental payment to help offset lost income while transitioning to organic farming or installing tree and berry crops. Funding is also available for landowners interested in protecting and preserving their farmland through an entity held easement that will keep the land in agriculture production. The project focus is to improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, and preserve farmland in the following 37 counties: Adams, Alexander, Boone, Cass, Champaign, Christian, Cook, Crawford, DeKalb, Ford, Franklin, Fulton, Iroquois, Jackson, Jefferson, Jo Daviess, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, LaSalle, Lee, Madison, Mason, McHenry, McLean, Menard, Ogle, Peoria, Perry, Piatt, Sangamon, Tazewell, Vermilion, Will, Winnebago, and Woodford.

Financial assistance will be available to pro-

ducers in Illinois who have land in the above-mentioned counties. While applications are accepted throughout the year, interested producers should submit a signed application (NRCS-CPA-1200 form) to the local NRCS field office, or through the <http://www.farmers.gov> website using their account, by the following dates to ensure applications are considered for 2023 funding.

The Land Management and Rental projects application cutoff dates are Dec. 2, 2022, and March 3, 2023. For Entity Held

Easements, the application cutoff dates are Dec. 23, 2022, and Feb. 24, 2023. A blank NRCS-CPA-1200 application form may be obtained from the local office or on the Illinois NRCS website. Producers using Farmers.gov, can sign in or create an account

by clicking on "Sign up" in the upper right of the website. To see if you are eligible to participate in the program, producers should contact their local NRCS field office or visit the Illinois NRCS website at www.il.nrcs.usda.gov



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Creating smart agriculture data standards for better productivity outcomes

The agriculture industry doesn't just grow crops, it also cultivates important data that helps organizations in the agricultural chain to gain a more holistic understanding of the potential for harvesting greater quality and quantities of U.S. products.

With smart agriculture data sets, farmers gain precision understanding of every acre in their fields. And further downstream, retailers and technology manufacturers are able to tailor their innovative equipment and services with precision focus and yield-producing inputs.

The Agricultural Digitization "Boom"

Digitization in agriculture has rapidly accelerated over the past decade and the pace of innovation continues to increase. On its own, digital data has some value, but the depth and quality come when a range of data, inputs and technology are combined and easily shared for wide access.

The Dire Need for Data Sharing

According to Forbes.com, manufacturers are moving to pay producers for outcomes. Rebate and subsidy programs are changing to reflect the new expectations placed on the rural economy and food standards. "To comply, it's important that farmers, producers and input providers demonstrate good stewardship and adherence to the rules. Together, these new conditions require all members of the agricultural and food production sector to have access to a unified data set that is easy to understand and share with stakeholders. Only through such a mechanism can validation and revenue generation be mutually assured."

However, when it comes

to data sharing, there seems to exist a struggle across the agricultural sector due to a lack of standards. With no common understanding of how to represent on-farm practices, new solutions often require farmers to enter their historical data multiple times.

"This is a major source of inefficiency," says Jack Marck, Managing Director of the Illinois AgTech Accelerator at the University of Illinois. "From the grower to the retailer to the startups that are working across the industry – everyone is struggling due to a lack of standards in data collection which leads to an inability to move that data between systems, which creates significant data entry work for farmers."

Growing Initiatives to Improve Agriculture Data Collaboration

Marck is part of a new initiative being led by IEEE Standard Association (IEEE SA). The group works with innovative technologies such as blockchain-based supply chain management solutions, AI-based digital agronomy, autonomous and semiautonomous machines, and IoT/remote sensing solutions which have created an overwhelming amount of information.

The goals of this group are to understand the current state of ag data interoperability (e.g., through workshops and conferences) and recommend best practices and guidelines for increasing collaboration around ag data collection, security, and management. Within these collaborations, IEEE SA will propose standards and certificates for data providers and consumers to accelerate innovation.

"We believe that understanding agricultural supply



Access to smart agriculture data sets means farmers can gain a better understanding of their fields. Learn about the importance of ag data sharing and discover the growing initiatives to improve collaboration around data collection and management.

chain data needs will benefit both small producers and large operations, related suppliers, including hardware and software vendors, as well as academic researchers and data standards developers," says Marck. "Understanding gaps in data and data infrastructures may also help funding agencies and venture capital firms prioritize new investments in the food supply chain space."

Continues Marck, "Addressing on-farm data quality at the source by standardizing how that data is stored and managed has significant implications across the value chain from accurately measuring sustainability practices on the farm to increasing supply chain integrity."

"We believe that understanding agricultural supply chain data needs will benefit both small producers and large operations, related suppliers, including hardware and software vendors, as well as academic researchers and data standards developers."

–Jack Marck, managing director, Illinois AgTech Accelerator at University of Illinois

The group, known as the SmartAg Team, is starting small, gathering information from stakeholders to identify current pain points and opportunities as well as examining potential solutions. As the team refines its understanding of the current landscape of problems and solutions, they will focus on platform-level interoperability to facilitate data compat-

ibility and flow between key technologies across on-farm, supply chain, and end use.

"At the end of the day, farmers are already expected to be expert agronomists, mechanics, and meteorologists. It's unfair that we expect them to be data analysts as well," says Marck. "We want to not only create common denominators for data, but to create more seamless

platforms for data sharing and access. We want to simplify data management for our growers so that they can more easily benefit from digital agronomy tools and the growing opportunities to monetize their data through partnerships across the supply chain."

Adds Marck, "We're ready to help our growers tell stories with some really compelling outcomes."