

Common Ground

Bruce Rauner, Governor · Raymond Poe, Director

October 2018



A Letter from the Director



At the Illinois Department of Agriculture, we're excited to be moving forward on a couple long-term projects that we know will benefit Illinois farmers and farming communities.

In June, Governor Rauner signed Senate Bill 2591, which adds commercial solar facilities to the type of projects that are required to enter into agricultural impact mitigation agreements with IDOA. This ensures that land impacted by the construction or deconstruction of solar projects is properly restored to its original pre-development productivity.

We're also very proud that a project IDOA has been working on for nearly two decades is finally a reality. In August, Governor Rauner signed the Industrial Hemp Act into law. This allows individuals licensed through IDOA to cultivate industrial hemp. We're currently in the process of creating application and licensing rules. This is just one more tool for Illinois farmers to diversify their portfolios and continue to be the most competitive producers nationwide.

Raymond Poe
IDOA Director

A handwritten signature of Raymond Poe in cursive script.

International Buyers Tour Illinois Grain Facilities

International buyers from Mexico, Peru, South Korea, and the Dominican Republic made the trip to Illinois earlier this month for IDOA's annual Grain Industry Tour. During the past five years, the Illinois Grain Tour has generated more than \$205 million in sales of grain, oilseeds, DDGS, and equipment.

"The export of Illinois grain is vital to the growth of our industry," said IDOA Director Raymond Poe. "Nearly half of the corn and soybeans produced in our state are exported, resulting in billions in direct sales annually. Each year, the Illinois Grain Tour gives us the opportunity to showcase some world-class facilities located right here in Illinois to foreign investors."



This year's grain tour made stops at the Melvin Price Locks and Dam in Alton; GSI in Assumption; RTS Family Farms in Auburn; Hagenbuch Family Farms in Utica; Marquis Energy in Hennepin; Seedburo Equipment Company in Des Plaines; and the CME Group, Chicago Board of Trade, and Illinois Soybean Association, all in Chicago.

The Great Pumpkin: Jack-O-Lanterns & Pies Come from Illinois



If you're carving a pumpkin this Halloween or baking a pumpkin pie on Thanksgiving, it's likely an Illinois farm grew both varieties of pumpkins. Illinois farmers grow more ornamental and processing pumpkins than any other state. In fact, farmers across the Land of Lincoln produced more than 644 million pounds of pumpkins in 2017. That's nearly four times more pumpkins than second-ranked California.

Most of those are processing pumpkins, the best type for canning and cooking. More than 90 percent of the nation's canning pumpkins are grown in two facilities near Morton. To find a pumpkin patch near IDOA's [listing of AgriTourism sites statewide](#),



An Apple A Day: Thousands Participate in Great Apple Crunch

On Thursday, October 11, more than 590,000 students at schools across the state of Illinois took part in the Fourth Annual Illinois Great Apple Crunch. Participating schools purchased locally-grown apples to serve to students, teaching them about the connection between healthy food and local farmers. Illinois students joined more than 1.5 million kids and teachers across the Great Lakes region to crunch into their apples all together at Noon on October 11. The Great Apple Crunch is sponsored each year by the [Illinois Farm to School Network](#) as a fun way for schools to celebrate local agriculture and get kids to enjoy delicious, fresh, and local produce.



Students at Bethel Grade School in Mount Vernon enjoyed their apples as part of the 2018 Great Apple Crunch on October 11, 2018, along with more than 590,000 students at schools across Illinois.



Students at Namaste Charter School in Chicago chose their apples to enjoy as part of the 2018 Great Apple Crunch on October 11, 2018, sponsored by the Illinois Farm to School Network.

UPCOMING EVENTS @

the Illinois State Fairgrounds



Canine Performance Events Dog Agility Trials

Livestock Center at IL State Fairgrounds, Springfield November 3 - 4

Out in the Barn Holiday Market

Expo Building at IL State Fairgrounds, Springfield November 10, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Memorial's Festival of Trees

Orr Building at IL State Fairgrounds, Springfield November 17 - 25

More info here: [Year Round Calendar of Events](#)



High on the Hog: October is National Pork Month

October is the month to celebrate America's 60,000 pork producers and their hard work, including the more than 2,000 pork producers across the State of Illinois. Those pork producers and the Illinois pork industry contribute more than \$1.8 billion dollars each year to our state's economy and provide more than 10,500 jobs, according to the Illinois Pork Producers Association. With 11 million hogs finished in Illinois in 2017, our state ranks fourth in pork production nationwide, behind Iowa, North Carolina, and Minnesota.



IDOA's Bureau of Meat and Poultry Inspection is responsible for administering the Meat and Poultry Inspection Act, which protects consumers when it comes to the wholesomeness and proper labeling of meat and poultry products. IDOA inspectors routinely inspect slaughter and processing facilities to ensure processors are following all state laws to keep meat and poultry products safe for your family to enjoy. Check out this link on IDOA's website to learn more about the [Bureau of Meat and Poultry Inspection](#).

