Illinois Gubernatorial Candidates Support C-FAR

Illinois gubernatorial candidates Rod Blagojevich and Jim Ryan kindly provided C-FAR members and other interested persons with information about their support of Illinois food and agriculture by responding to a question (see below) posed by C-FAR. The C-FAR appropriation is clearly a priority for both candidates. C-FAR thanks Mr. Blagojevich and Mr. Ryan for responding to our question and for their commitment to our industry.

As governor, how will you work to strengthen Illinois’ food and agricultural industry, and specifically, what role do you feel publicly funded research plays in this endeavor?

Rod Blagojevich:
Research provides the foundation for the future of Illinois’ food and agricultural sector in meeting the challenges of expanding global markets, increased competition, food safety, environmental quality, and natural resource conservation. Illinois consumers have benefited from agricultural research through higher quality, safer, and more affordable products.

C-FAR represents an unusually wide coalition, from producers to consumer advocates. In fiscal year 2000, Illinois ranked 15th out of the top twenty land

Jim Ryan:
The food and agricultural industry is one of Illinois’ most significant economic engines. I understand the importance of this industry and will work to bolster value-added products, food and agriculture research, and opening free markets worldwide.

The biofuels industry helps agriculture while assisting the national effort to become more energy independent. I strongly support ethanol and will be a persistent voice in the nation’s capital promoting the role of ethanol in our energy policy. In addition, Illinois...
C-FAR Funding in Illinois: Just How Significant Is It?

The significant reduction of C-FAR’s appropriation (from $15 million annually for FY00 through FY02 to $6.968 million in FY03) has Illinois food and agriculture industry stakeholders and citizens alike wondering. “What impact will this have on the industry and our state?” While no one can predict the specific implications, the consensus among industry representatives and associated researchers is that the impact will be huge—potentially devastating if funding is not reestablished next year. Why? Because C-FAR funding is a critical source of state funds for food and agriculture research in Illinois.

For example, in FY01 the University of Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station reported $26.5 million in expenditures from State of Illinois appropriations for food and agricultural research. C-FAR funded over 34% ($9.1 million) of these expenditures—a significant percentage indeed.

Are other funds, such as federal dollars and industry grants, available for food, agriculture, environmental, consumer, and related research? Yes, but as federal funding for research in these areas has remained stagnant over the past decade, state-funded research has taken on a more significant role. In addition, state funds are used to focus on priorities and opportunities unique to Illinois.

C-FAR provides the mechanism for meaningfully engaging our state’s industry professionals and thus ensuring that Illinois’ most pressing needs are addressed. C-FAR has brought together a myriad of professional interests within our state’s food and agriculture sector. Since the first C-FAR appropriation in FY96, thousands of volunteer hours have been devoted to ensuring the sound investment of these public funds. It is imperative that the vital role of the C-FAR appropriation be recognized.

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C-FAR Connection
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grant universities in actual expenditures for food and agricultural research from state investments. Furthermore, C-FAR funding was cut by over half in FY03. Illinois can do better. As I announced to the press earlier today (August 13, 2002), I support restoration of full funding for this important program.

As governor, I will use the powers of the state to ensure that members of our agricultural community have the support and respect that they deserve. I have pledged to work to help farmers sell more value-added products both domestically and around the globe. I would direct more than $25 million of my proposed Illinois Opportunity Fund to fuel the expansion of value-added agricultural cooperatives in the state, ensuring more profit for farmers.

As a member of Congress, I have advocated the use of ethanol. Ethanol is an Illinois success story, but Illinois can do more. I would extend the current state tax incentive for ethanol—a 30% reduction in the state sales tax—and add a similar incentive for the purchase of soy-based biodiesel fuels. I will spur construction of new ethanol plants in the state through new state incentives which can leverage private investments.

I will seek new markets for the state's agricultural products and emphasize trade with international partners. I will create the new position of Ag-Bassador, a special appointee to work with farmers, associations, and agribusiness on trade policy and promotion. The relationships I have formed as a member of Congress will be helpful in increasing trade opportunities. I will also invest in renewable energy advances, which can produce clean, cheap energy; help wean America off dependence on foreign oil; and benefit farmers who receive an additional source of income. Other states are investing more than Illinois in renewable energy. If we don’t do the same, we will be left behind.

Most importantly, I will convene the first Governor’s Advisory Council of Farmers and Farm Families to advise me on important issues, from waterway and road infrastructure to taxes to the environment. I would seek this group’s input on the funding mechanism to replenish the Grain Insurance Fund, recently depleted because of corporate failure. I do not believe the fund should be replenished by placing the burden on the backs of small farmers.

As governor, how will you work to strengthen Illinois’ food and agricultural industry, and specifically, what role do you feel publicly funded research plays in this endeavor?

As a top priority.

must support other value-added products. I also recognize the value of Illinois livestock production and its economic impact in our rural areas. As governor, I will support the AgriFirst program and restoration of state funds for AgriFirst projects.

One of the state’s most important programs for investing in the long-term future of Illinois agriculture is the C-FAR initiative. In 1995, when Governor Edgar first endorsed C-FAR, he did so because Illinois was lagging behind other states in the amount of state funds invested in food and agricultural research. Illinois ranked 26th in the country. The small amount of state investment in agricultural research in this state was shameful.

C-FAR was intended to move Illinois into the top 10 states in the country. That has never happened. The original plan to appropriate $15 million annually to C-FAR was reached three years ago, but Illinois was still only ranked 15th in the country. The program has never been able to obtain funds above the $15-million mark.

Because of the budget crisis, the $15 million C-FAR appropriation was reduced to $6.9 million. This was a mistake. Now is when we should most recognize the importance of investing in our future.

As governor, I will restore the $15 million C-FAR appropriation. I will work with the agricultural community to increase funding and ensure that Illinois is among the nation’s top states in food and agricultural research.

Let’s put this in perspective. In 2001, Illinois appropriated $15 million for C-FAR, but California spent nearly $120 million on food and agricultural research. Florida spent $80 million. Seven other Midwestern states spent more state funds on research than Illinois. What’s wrong with this picture?

Our neighboring states have smaller populations and state budgets, but they spend more money on food and agricultural research than Illinois. State leaders must realize this type of research is really an investment in our future. Funding ways to be more efficient is critical to survival. Developing new products or uses of farm products helps Illinois farmers stay viable. Improving technology and techniques for handling animal wastes improves quality of life in Illinois and reduces problems for Illinois livestock operators.

For these reasons, I will make food and agricultural research a top priority.
Illinois lamb and wool producers are banding together to enhance the value of their wool and identify new markets to boost their industry. With the assistance of C-FAR-funded researchers Dean Oswald, University of Illinois Extension animal systems educator based in Macomb, and A. Richard Cobb, University of Illinois Extension sheep specialist, Illinois producers have formed Illinois Value-Added Wool Producers, Inc. (IVAWP), a cooperative that is working to develop and market products manufactured from members’ own wool. “C-FAR funding has allowed the cooperative to look at product feasibility, research new products, and address marketing issues,” said Oswald.

With the price of wool averaging only about four to five cents a pound, producers typically pay more in shearing costs than they receive for the wool. IVAWP members plan to generate additional income by producing wool-based products rather than selling the raw wool. This strategy is essential to maintaining the viability of wool production in Illinois. In addition to being instrumental in the formation of the coop, Oswald and Cobb are leading the effort to help producers identify alternative markets and develop new strategies for promoting Illinois wool.

IVAWP members have attended brainstorming sessions to discuss product and market alternatives for the diverse types of wool produced in Illinois. Several products have been identified for further evaluation. For example:

**High-quality wool:** Stadium or promotional blankets, wool socks, and bedding materials have been identified as potential uses for high-quality wool. The production of stadium blankets with the colors and logos of colleges and universities has proven successful for producers in other states. IVAWP members have investigated the 100 largest private and publicly held companies in Illinois, as well as Illinois colleges and universities, to determine their potential as consumers of wool promotional items.

**Lower quality wool:** Oil spill mats, weed-preventative mats for horticulture use, horse saddle blankets, and wool filters for odor reduction in swine confinement buildings have been identified as possible uses of low-quality wool. Researchers in the Bioenvironmental Engineering Division of the University of Illinois are testing wool fiber products for their effectiveness as filters for reducing odor from swine confinement facilities in Illinois. Tests will be conducted using exhaust fans with known odorous compounds. Different materials and products varying in thickness will be tested.
Welcome to our new staff member

We are pleased to share that Gloria Buhrmester has recently joined the C-FAR team. Gloria serves as the initial contact person for the C-FAR office and assists with maintaining C-FAR’s financial records. Welcome, Gloria!

IVAWP also hopes to increase public awareness and support of state agricultural products through participating in the Illinois Department of Agriculture’s Illinois Products Logo Program. All wool products developed by IVAWP will feature the logo in advertising and marketing.

IVAWP has contracted with the Office of Student Business Initiatives (OSBI) at the University of Illinois to complete feasibility studies on various wool-based products. MBA students will work with producers to examine the market potential and economics of product development. Further studies may include developing a business plan and planning a Web presence for the cooperative.

“There is a real need to find a market for Illinois wool. Hopefully, with the help of C-FAR, a good solution to low wool prices will be found,” said Gene McGrew, wool producer from McDonough County and executive secretary of Illinois Lamb and Wool Producers, Inc.

Producers interested in joining IVAWP can contact the cooperative’s secretary-treasurer Gene McGrew at 309.772.8064 or via e-mail at cempas@bushnell.net.

Illinois State University Farm at Lexington

Randy Winter
Department of Agriculture Chairman
Illinois State University

Illinois State University (ISU), a C-FAR partner research institution, is expanding its capacity for food and agricultural research through the establishment of its new Lexington farm. In 1999, ISU sold 132 acres of its “east” farm in Normal for $5.1 million and then purchased 360 acres of farmland in Lexington (including the former GROWMARK, Inc., research farm). The university is in the process of moving its livestock operations from the current site in Normal to the new farm in Lexington. “This is a wonderful time for ISU agriculture. The new farm will directly benefit farmers and students because it is designed to support teaching, research, and the public,” said Randy Winter, ISU agriculture department chairman.

Located 18 miles northeast of Normal, just off of Interstate 55, the Lexington farm facility features three swine finishing barns, two beef finishing barns, a beef feed lot, a barn that will serve as a quarantine facility, a feed pellet mill, three storage buildings, and an office–conference building. Several new buildings are under construction as well, including a swine farrowing and nursery unit, a swine breeding and gestation barn, a 704-foot beef cow–calf barn, and a feed processing center. The farm will also feature an integrated manure handling system that will eliminate the need to apply raw manure to farmland. Once the manure handling system and main buildings are ready for use, animals will be moved to the new farm. Hogs are expected to be moved this fall, with beef cattle and sheep following next spring.

(continued on page 6)
A primary objective of the farm is to provide a hands-on farming experience for students studying agriculture and related disciplines. Even though most students will probably not be farm owners, participating in farming activities first-hand is an important part of their education and preparation for careers that directly relate to agriculture's production sector.

The new farm will significantly enhance the university’s ability to do quality research; its increased capacity will allow for more large-scale research projects. For example, beef cow numbers are expected to double eventually. “Researchers will be able to conduct a broader range of agricultural research initiatives that address the needs of producers and other industry stakeholders,” said Winter. Furthermore, the amount of funding generated for research is expected to increase and the greater diversity of projects will likely lead to more alliances with external partners. Several private companies have already shown interest in collaborative research efforts at the new facility.

In addition to the new Lexington farm, ISU will maintain its 270-acre “west” farm, located on Gregory Street in Normal. This farm will continue to be used for research plots and crop production, and it will remain the site for aquaculture and horticulture operations.

“The Lexington farm takes our agriculture program to the next level. It also strengthens our state’s food and agriculture research program as a whole,” said Winter. “We are now positioned to conduct a wider range of C-FAR projects that benefit producers, consumers, policy makers, and citizens in general.”

To arrange a tour of the farm, contact farm manager Russ Derango at 309.438.7021 or via e-mail at rjderan@ilstu.edu.

**Alternative Crops for Illinois Website**

A new website is now available that features 414 different crops and evaluates their suitability for Illinois soil and climate conditions. The site, located at www.sws.uiuc.edu/data/altcrops/, is designed to help farmers identify and find information on potential alternative crops they might like to grow. Funding for development of this site was provided through the C-FAR FY01 External Competitive Grants Program.

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY’S NEW 360-ACRE FARM IS LOCATED IN LEXINGTON.
Farm.doc Receives National Recognition

The C-FAR-funded farm.doc website, which provides farmers with a variety of decision-making information and analysis tools, has received the highly prestigious American Agricultural Economics Association (AAEA) Distinguished Extension Program Award. Only one such award is presented annually to a program selected from nominees submitted by institutions across the United States.

“Farm.doc is a unique multidisciplinary project led by talented people working together across many areas of agriculture and education,” said Nels Kasey, chair of C-FAR’s Expanding Agricultural Markets Working Group. “This diverse group coming together under strong leadership is what makes farm.doc such a powerful and impressive tool for the agriculture industry to use in a variety of situations, from farming to agribusiness to end-use of our products.”

“The farm.doc program encompasses a broad spectrum of expertise and research-based education materials related to the areas of agricultural finance, marketing and outlook, farm management, agricultural policy, and law and taxation,” said Scott Irwin, a professor of agricultural marketing and price analysis who is the project’s team leader. Other University of Illinois faculty providing leadership are Paul Ellinger, Darrel Good, Dale Lattz, Robert Hauser, Gary Schnitkey (current leader of the C-FAR Information Systems and Technology Strategic Research Initiative [SRI]), Bruce Sherrick, Donald Uchtmann, and Sarahelen Thompson (former SRI leader). Joao Martines provides overall technical management for the project. U of I Extension educators located throughout the state also participate.

A growing number of Illinois producers from across the state are benefiting from the farm.doc website. Website usage has increased from about 10,000 hits per month when the project was initiated to nearly 100,000 hits per month. There have been nearly 60,000 downloads of research reports on the performance of agricultural market advisory services, nearly 4,000 downloads of Farm Analysis Solution Tools (FAST) spreadsheets, and distribution of over 2,000 FAST CDs. Several farm magazines have also given the site a high rating.

“Farm.doc has succeeded in meeting one of the most difficult challenges facing contemporary extension and outreach programs,” said Irwin. “A new model for extension and outreach activities has been developed. This is important because agricultural economics departments throughout the country are all attempting to serve an increasingly diverse and wide audience with fewer and fewer extension personnel.”

Congratulations to farm.doc team members in receiving this prestigious award and for their outstanding work!

Websites to Watch

- **C-FAR**
  [www.ilcfar.org](http://www.ilcfar.org)

- **Information Systems and Technology SRI**
  [web.aces.uiuc.edu/sriit](http://web.aces.uiuc.edu/sriit)

- **Rural Community Development SRI**
  [www.siu.edu/~i-farrm](http://www.siu.edu/~i-farrm)

- **Swine Odor and Waste Management SRI**
  [sowm.outreach.uiuc.edu](http://sowm.outreach.uiuc.edu)

- **Food Safety SRI**
  [www.siu.edu/~foodsaf](http://www.siu.edu/~foodsaf)

- **Water Quality SRI**
  [web.aces.uiuc.edu/sriwq](http://web.aces.uiuc.edu/sriwq)

- **NAT Tools for Good Health**
  [www.nat.uiuc.edu](http://www.nat.uiuc.edu)
  For analyzing diet and food choices.

- **farm.doc**
  [www.farmdoc.uiuc.edu](http://www.farmdoc.uiuc.edu)
  Provides farmers with decision-making information and analysis tools.

- **Illinois TRAILL**
  [il-traill.outreach.uiuc.edu](http://il-traill.outreach.uiuc.edu)
  Organizes livestock research, information, and expert services.

- **Interactive Agronomy Handbook**
  [web.aces.uiuc.edu/iah](http://web.aces.uiuc.edu/iah)
  Databases and online resources complement handbook.

- **Pest Management & Crop Development Bulletin**
  [www.ag.uiuc.edu/cespubs/pest](http://www.ag.uiuc.edu/cespubs/pest)
  Provides scouting reports, management advice, and decision-aid tools.

- **Illinois IPM Online**
  [www.ipm.uiuc.edu](http://www.ipm.uiuc.edu)
  An environment for learning about integrated pest management.

- **Illinois Watershed Management Clearinghouse**
  [web.aces.uiuc.edu/watershed](http://web.aces.uiuc.edu/watershed)
  Helps groups create and implement a plan to address local watershed issues.

- **Illinois World Food and Sustainable Agriculture Program**
  [web.aces.uiuc.edu/wf](http://web.aces.uiuc.edu/wf)
  Covers world food issues and related agriculture and natural resource implications.

- **Community Development Toolbox**
  [www.ag.uiuc.edu/~lced/cfarsriit.html](http://www.ag.uiuc.edu/~lced/cfarsriit.html)
  Addresses rural needs for data analysis.
November 13  Board of Directors Meeting (Southern Illinois University at Carbondale)
November 14  C-FAR Day at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
January 14  All Working Group Meeting (location to be announced)
January 16  Board of Directors Meeting
February 18  Annual Meeting (Northfield Inn, Suites & Conference Center – Springfield)
February 26  Board of Directors Meeting (Western Illinois University)
    March 6  Expanding Agricultural Markets Working Group Meeting
    March 7  Rural Economic Development Working Group Meeting
    March 10  Agricultural Production Systems Working Group Meeting
    March 11  Human Nutrition and Food Safety Working Group Meeting
    March 12  Natural Resources Working Group Meeting
    July 9  Board of Directors Meeting
August 19  Semi-Annual Meeting (location to be announced)

March WG meetings (to review External Competitive Grants Program proposals) will be held at the Holiday Inn in Urbana.

Please call the C-FAR office or check the calendar on the C-FAR website at www.ilcfar.org for further details.