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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Strategic plan to grow Indiana agriculture over next decade**

**INDIANAPOLIS (June 26, 2017)** — Food and agriculture has been a driving force in Indiana’s economy since it became a state 200 years ago and remains one of the leading industries today. According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, there are 57,500 farming operations across the state, and Indiana ranks 11th in the nation in agricultural sales. In order to move the industry forward, many leaders of Indiana's agricultural community joined together over the past 18 months and developed a 10-year *Indiana Agriculture Strategic Plan*.

The plan was unveiled to the public at an event on Monday and included presentations, panel discussions and speakers that touched on the plan’s strategic priorities, initiatives and actions to lift up all of Indiana agriculture through 2027.

“Agriculture is a fundamental part of Indiana’s heritage, our present economy, and most important, our future,” said Randy Kron, Indiana Farm Bureau President. “This plan ensures that Indiana agriculture not only remains competitive, but also a leader both nationally and internationally over the next decade. This is an exciting time to be a part of the industry.”

The plan’s vision is for Indiana agriculture to “enrich lives through innovation, education and collaboration.” This can be realized by focusing on the plan’s seven priorities:

* Economic & Community Development
* Education & Career Development
* Food and Agricultural Innovation
* Infrastructure
* Leadership Development
* Natural Resources, Stewardship & Environment
* Public Relations & Outreach

Each priority includes several key initiatives, which list specific action items. To create a clear path forward, each action item includes a champion(s), designated timeframe and resources required to complete the action.

The plan was developed by a diverse committee of leaders and representatives from Indiana’s agricultural organizations encompassing agricultural boards, universities, non-government and governmental organizations. As a way to create additional buy-in from all sectors of agriculture, the strategic planning committee conducted nearly two dozen listening sessions and gathered feedback from more than 100 online surveys, which went to farmers, agribusinesses and other industry organizations.

“This plan is a testament to the strong collaboration we have in Indiana and will help drive success for farmers, the industry and our state’s economy,” said Ted McKinney, Indiana State Department of Agriculture Director. “There are many crucial components to this plan, which span a variety of sectors of agriculture, but the bottom line is that we are working together to move the industry forward.”

A copy of the strategic plan and other materials can be found at [www.in.gov/isda/3547.htm](http://www.in.gov/isda/3547.htm).

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*Note to the press: The following statements about the Indiana Agriculture Strategic Plan were provided by various leaders representing agricultural organizations, boards, universities, non-government and governmental organizations.*

*"Creating a strong economic climate and aligning nutrient management strategies have been values of ACI, and now we look forward to joining our partners to bring Indiana to the next level in these areas," said* ***Amy Cornell, President of the Agribusiness Council of Indiana****. "This strategic outline for agriculture and the partners that came together to create it demonstrates that Indiana is the place to be for agribusiness."*

*“AgrIInstitute is pleased to support and be involved in taking Indiana agriculture to the next level – the opportunities for Indiana are very exciting,” said* ***Beth Archer, Executive Director of AgriIInstitute.*** *“Advancing the leadership capacity of the industry is a foundation of our future, and we are staged to see great things.”*

*“Highlighting the remarkable strengths and opportunities in the area of food and agricultural innovation as one of the main pillars of the Indiana Agriculture Strategic Plan verifies the long-term commitment of our state to this sector,” said* ***Beth Bechdol, president and CEO of AgriNovus Indiana.*** *“Our agbiosciences sector brings together the assets of our agriculture, life sciences, and technology industries which offer tremendous economic development potential across the state.”*

*“We see the Indiana State Fairgrounds, the state’s largest public venue promoting Indiana agriculture, as the perfect place to lift up the Indiana Agriculture Strategic Plan and share the progress on all initiatives with Hoosiers,” said* ***Cynthia C. Hoye, Executive Director of the Indiana State Fair Commission.***

*“We at Indiana Dairy Producers are anticipating the Indiana Ag Strategic Plan and the forth coming results; we have so much to be excited about as we look to the future of the dairy industry and all of agriculture in our great state of Indiana,” said* ***Douglas Leman, Executive Director of Indiana Dairy Producers.***

*“The Indiana Soybean Alliance, Indiana Corn Marketing Council, and Indiana Corn Growers Association are proud to be a part of Indiana’s new 10-year Strategic Plan,” said* ***Jane Ade Stevens, CEO of Indiana Soybean Alliance, Indiana Corn Marketing Council, Indiana Corn Growers Association.*** *“While all the priorities of the plan are important to corn and soybean farmers, economic development, environmental stewardship and infrastructure rise to the top. Indiana soybean and corn farmers are committed to protecting the land, roadways, and waterways, and we are pleased to see the direction this plan is heading to ensure agriculture stays viable in Indiana.”*

*“The Indiana Agriculture Strategic Plan lays down a bold, dynamic agenda for the next decade – an agenda that will help us build an exciting future for our agricultural industry. Purdue Agriculture is proud to have been a partner in the development of the strategic plan, and is excited to work with ISDA and all of Indiana agriculture in making the plan a reality,” said* ***Jay Akridge, Glenn W. Sample Dean of Agriculture, Purdue University.***

*“Yogi Berra said, ‘If you don’t know where you are going, you’ll end up someplace else.’ I’m proud of all the hard work put forward by Indiana ag leaders to give direction on many levels to all of our collective efforts,” said* ***Joe Moore, Executive Vice President of the Indiana Beef Cattle Association, Indiana Beef Council.***

*“On behalf of Indiana's Pork producers, Jeanette Merritt and I appreciated the chance to participate in the preparation of this strategic plan,” said* ***Josh Trenary, Executive Director of Indiana Pork.*** *“As someone who spends a lot of time thinking about nutrient management in the context of the livestock industry, I was particularly pleased to participate in the environmental discussion. In recently revisiting the plan ahead of the launch event, it was gratifying to see progress had already been made with our environmental goals. I look forward to Indiana Pork being a part of that continued progress.”*

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