



News Release

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New analysis finds 1 in 6 Iowans employed by agriculture

Des Moines, Iowa — Aug. 18, 2009 — Iowa agriculture puts healthy, affordable choices of food on the table for today's consumers and brings jobs and economic development to the state according to a just-completed economic analysis sponsored by the Coalition to Support Iowa's Farmers (CSIF).

The tally of agriculture's impact, based on 2007 Census of Agriculture data, reveals farming is tightly linked to many Iowa industries. Production agriculture and ag-related industries directly and indirectly employ one of every six Iowans (or 17 percent of the state's workforce). They're also responsible for adding \$72.1 billion to the state's economy, or 27 percent of the state's total. This represents a two percent increase over a previous analysis utilizing 2002 Census of Agriculture data.

That's good news during a time of economic adversity and shows Iowa agriculture continues to grow. In fact, the strong presence of ag production, processing and manufacturing in Iowa helps buffer the state from the severity of national economic downturns. Iowa's unemployment rate is 6.1 percent compared to the national total of 9.4 percent.

"What impresses me," says Dan Otto, Iowa State University extension economist who helped prepare the study, "is that when you consider the growth and diversification of Iowa's economy over recent years, agriculture is still a very dominant player. For certain counties, it is the dominant industry."

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“The diversification of farming has made agriculture the leading industry in more than a quarter of the counties in our state,” he adds. “One could say that this study shows Iowa is as dependent on farming as Detroit is on car manufacturing.”

Craig Floss, chief executive officer of the Iowa Corn Growers Association and CSIF board president, says the purpose of the study was to find out how much the state’s current economy is being helped by farming today. The findings are good news for Iowa.

“It’s clear that farming, food and feed processing, and every other area agriculture touches, is critical to Iowa,” he says. “The continued support and growth of farming is vital to the long-term economic health of our state.”

The CSIF-sponsored analysis shows that farming and ag-related industries in Iowa account for nearly \$23 billion in value-added, (19 percent of Iowa’s total), which takes into account the process of producing and converting agricultural commodities into products suitable for use by consumers both in and outside Iowa.

The study also reaffirms the importance of livestock and poultry farming’s contribution to individual families. Statewide, livestock and poultry production contributes nearly \$1.1 billion to household income. Raising livestock and poultry alone generates 43,324 jobs in Iowa. When meat processing is factored in, research shows a contribution of 80,278 jobs to the state with a total economic value of \$19.5 billion in Iowa.

The analysis included a review of data from several sources including the 2007 Census of Agriculture, the U.S. Bureaus of Economic Analysis and Labor Statistics, the Iowa Department of Workforce Development, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the IMPLAN economic modeling software.

Additional details, including a complete county-by-county breakdown of the analysis results (including jobs and household income), are available at the CSIF website, www.supportfarmers.com.