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Subject: [calsnews-release] Report: Agriculture and Agricultural Sciences Key to U.S. Economic Growth

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Report: Agriculture and Agricultural Sciences Key to U.S. Economic Growth

AMES, Iowa —A new report makes the case that agriculture and agricultural sciences are poised to drive economic growth and job creation to new heights — with the essential research and extension support of land-grant universities like Iowa State University.

The report, "Power and Promise: Agbioscience in the North Central United States," was prepared for 12 north-central land-grant universities, including Iowa State University, by Battelle, the Columbus, Ohio-based independent research and development group. The report was released Aug. 1.

Agbiosciences, the report states, represent fields of science that generate widespread innovations, technologies and solutions to real-world needs in food security, human health, economic development and environmental sustainability.

Wendy Wintersteen, dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Iowa State, said that world-class university-based agricultural experiment stations and extension services, coupled with the north-central region's world-leading agricultural productivity, are critical assets. "The report makes it abundantly clear that land-grant universities are core institutions to address national and global needs in agricultural productivity, food security, human health and environmental quality," Wintersteen said.

The report emphasizes the "extreme relevance" of the land-grant university, experiment station and extension system in meeting the needs of a modern U.S. economy dependent on innovation, knowledge and technological advancement.

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey said, "This report confirms what I have been seeing around the state, that agriculture and agricultural sciences are a key economic driver in Iowa. It is vital that we have the education system in place so that we have the employees equipped to take advantage of the opportunities available."

Wintersteen said the report underscores the central message found in Iowa State's new strategic plan. "Iowa State's strategic plan focuses on how we meet the challenges of the 21st century through creating, sharing and applying new knowledge," she said. "Research and extension are key to how we more sustainably produce food, energy and everyday materials, how we protect plant, animal and human health, and how we care for our environment."

The 12 states of the north-central region make up 21 percent of the nation's landmass, but represent:
An agricultural industry valued at \$125 billion with more than 2.4 million jobs

- 45 percent of the nation's agricultural exports (Iowa is second nationally in ag exports, valued at more than \$7 billion)
- 80 percent of U.S. soybean and feed grain production
- 45 percent of U.S. livestock exports
- 10 of the top 25 U.S. food manufacturers
- 90 percent of the nation's ethanol production
- Several of the world's largest seed companies and ag equipment manufacturers

The economic development opportunities are immense, said Wintersteen. "The issues addressed by agricultural sciences are strategic to the nation," she said. "That's why the report emphasizes expanded support for agbioscience research and extension at national and state levels. In challenging budget times, funding support is critical to maintaining and expanding U.S. leadership in agriculture and agricultural sciences."

The "Power and Promise: Agbioscience in the North Central United States" full report and executive summary can be found at <http://nccea.org/documents/powerandpromiseweb.pdf>.

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