



Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources

Highlights at a Glance

- The agribusiness industry in Illinois employs nearly 170,000 and contributes \$19 billion to the state's economy. Given the domestic and export markets for its products, the industry is expected to remain a significant contributor in both jobs and product.
- Over 75 percent of the state's total land area is dedicated to farming in Illinois.
- Illinois is a leading national producer of soybeans, corn and swine. The state's climate and soil types also enable farmers to grow and raise many other agriculture commodities including cattle, wheat, oats, sorghum, hay, sheep and poultry.
- While employment in the traditional "on farm" agricultural production industry is expected to continue to decline, overall employment in agribusiness, food and natural resources is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all industries in Illinois.
- Specific segments within the agribusiness industry will experience average growth and many additional job openings will arise from the need to replace those workers who leave the labor force. For example, the landscape and horticultural services segment should have among the most rapid industry job growth in Illinois.
- Those seeking careers in agribusiness need to have a well-rounded educational background in their specific interests (for example, agronomy, agricultural economics and business, natural resources conservation, horticulture, crop science, and animal science). Those interested in these areas who acquire the necessary education and skills should find ample opportunities for employment in Illinois and the Midwest.

Nature of the Industry

The agribusiness industry plays a vital role in both the state and national economies and our daily lives. It supplies us and many other countries with a wide variety of food products and non-food products such as fibers, lumber, and recreation. It contributes positively to our foreign trade balance and it remains one of the Nation's and state's larger industries in terms of total employment. However, technology continues to enable us to produce more of these products with fewer workers. The largest segment of the traditional agricultural production industry in Illinois includes two large subsectors, crop production and animal production. Of course, many farms in Illinois have both crops and livestock, such as those that grow their own animal feed, or have diverse enterprises. The vast majority of farms, ranches, and other agribusiness companies are small enterprises, owned and operated by families as their primary or secondary source of income. Although large family farms (those generating more than \$250,000 per year in gross annual sales) and corporate farms comprise less than 10 percent of the establishments in the industry, they produce three-fourths of all agricultural output. Increasingly, these large farms are being operated for the benefit of large agribusiness firms, which buy most of the product. The agribusiness industry sector is being transformed by the implementation of science and technology in almost every phase of the agricultural process (for example, bioengineered crops, the use of global positioning equipment, animal genetics, further mechanization, and marketing). These changes are increasing the employment opportunities in all agribusiness fields including: agricultural support services; farm management services; aerial dusting and spraying; farm labor contractors; and, animal breeding and insemination.

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)		Emp.	Employment Change		Average Annual Job Openings			2015	Training/ Education Level
			2014-2024	Percent	Growth	due to	Median		
Code	Title	2014	Number	Percent	Growth	Replcmnts	Total	Annual Wage	
00-0000 Total, All Occupations		6,263,919	371,593	5.93	42,732	147,453	190,185	\$37,316	
Agribusiness Systems									
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers & Other Ag Managers	50,597	-253	-0.50%	0	862	862	\$67,928	Long-term on-the-job training
51-1011	1st-Line Spvrs/Mgrs Production Workers*	1,278	61	4.80%	6	18	24	\$58,008	Work experience in a related occ.
11-2022	Sales Managers*	721	73	10.12%	7	15	22	\$106,308	Bachelor's degree plus work exp.
11-3071	Transportation, Storage & Dist. Managers*	568	26	4.62%	3	16	19	\$81,317	Work experience in a related occ.
41-4011	Sales Reps, Whls/Mfg, Tech/Scientific Products*	671	14	2.05%	1	15	16	\$65,397	Moderate-term on-the-job training
45-1011	1st-Line Spvrs/Mgrs Farm/Fish/Forestry Workers	634	-80	-12.62%	0	15	15	\$41,886	Moderate-term on-the-job training
13-1021	Purchasing Agents & Buyers, Farm Products	591	31	5.25%	3	12	15	\$54,094	Work experience in a related occ.
Animal Systems									
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers & Other Ag Managers	50,597	-253	-0.50%	0	862	862	\$67,928	Long-term on-the-job training
29-2056	Veterinary Technologists & Technicians	3,724	911	24.46%	91	37	128	\$30,319	Associate degree
29-1131	Veterinarians	2,946	360	12.22%	36	45	81	\$82,653	First professional degree
45-2093	Farmworkers, Farm & Ranch Animals	2,265	-178	-7.86%	0	60	60	\$23,287	Short-term on-the-job training
31-9096	Vet Assistants & Lab Animal Caretakers	1,760	221	12.56%	22	37	59	\$26,374	Short-term on-the-job training
45-1011	1st-Line Spvrs/Mgrs Farm/Fish/Forestry Workers	634	-80	-12.62%	0	15	15	\$41,886	Moderate-term on-the-job training
25-1041	Agricultural Sciences Faculty	153	3	1.96%	0	3	3	\$76,223	Doctoral degree
19-1011	Animal Scientists	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Bachelor's degree
Environmental Service Systems									
19-1013	Soil & Plant Scientists	675	92	13.63%	9	23	32	\$64,228	Bachelor's degree
19-2041	Environmental Scientists & Specialists*	490	68	13.94%	7	14	21	\$83,719	Master's Degree
19-4091	Environmental Science & Protection Techs*	331	24	7.34%	2	14	16	\$36,308	Associate degree
17-2081	Environmental Engineers*	348	54	15.60%	5	7	12	\$84,606	Bachelor's degree
25-1053	Environmental Science Faculty	179	6	3.35%	1	3	4	\$85,683	Doctoral degree
Food Products & Processing Systems									
51-3021	Butchers & Meat Cutters	7,778	667	8.58%	67	154	221	\$25,399	Long-term on-the-job training
51-3023	Slaughterers & Meat Packers	4,612	231	5.01%	23	91	114	\$26,120	Moderate-term on-the-job training
51-3022	Meat, Poultry & Fish Cutters & Trimmers	3,410	221	6.48%	22	67	89	\$24,375	Short-term on-the-job training
45-2041	Graders & Sorters, Agricultural Products	1,700	-58	-3.41%	0	27	27	\$21,657	Work experience in a related occ.
45-2011	Agricultural Inspectors	473	32	6.77%	3	12	15	\$56,512	Work experience in a related occ.
19-4011	Agricultural & Food Science Technicians	820	56	6.83%	6	27	33	\$39,108	Associate degree
29-1031	Dietitians & Nutritionists*	613	64	10.41%	6	5	11	\$57,309	Bachelor's degree
19-1012	Food Scientists & Technologists*	117	8	7.17%	1	4	5	\$61,483	Bachelor's degree
19-1022	Microbiologists*	73	6	8.19%	1	2	3	\$56,360	Doctoral degree
17-2021	Agricultural Engineers	103	3	2.91%	0	2	2	\$70,189	Bachelor's degree
41-4012	Sales Reps, Whls/Mfg, exc. Tech/Sci. Products*	4,113	236	5.69%	24	85	109	\$58,829	Moderate-term on-the-job training
13-1021	Purchasing Agents & Buyers, Farm Products	591	31	5.25%	3	12	15	\$54,094	Work experience in a related occ.
41-4011	Sales Reps, Whls/Mfg, Tech/Scientific Products*	671	14	5.96%	1	13	14	\$65,397	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Natural Resources Systems									
11-9121	Natural Sciences Managers	1,402	117	8.35%	12	29	41	\$115,009	Bachelor's degree plus work exp.
19-1031	Conservation Scientists	432	37	8.56%	4	19	23	\$69,199	Bachelor's degree
19-4093	Forest & Conservation Technicians	469	9	1.92%	1	20	21	\$39,027	Associate degree
19-4021	Biological Technicians*	366	17	4.51%	2	10	12	\$41,902	Associate degree
45-4011	Forest & Conservation Workers	289	1	0.35%	0	7	7	\$32,262	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Plant Systems									
37-3011	Landscaping & Groundskeeping Workers	44,237	2,203	4.98%	220	798	1,018	\$26,099	Short-term on-the-job training
37-1012	1st-Line Spvrs/Mgrs, Landscaping & Lawn Service	6,306	191	3.03%	19	105	124	\$37,871	Work experience in a related occ.
37-3019	Grounds Maintenance Workers, All Other	3,159	177	5.60%	18	57	75	\$30,537	Short-term on-the-job training
37-3013	Tree Trimmers & Pruners	1,596	65	4.07%	6	29	35	\$39,788	Short-term on-the-job training
19-1013	Soil & Plant Scientists	675	92	13.63%	9	23	32	\$64,228	Bachelor's degree
37-3012	Pesticide Handlers, Sprayers & Applicators	1,456	29	1.99%	3	26	29	\$35,426	Moderate-term on-the-job training
17-1012	Landscape Architects	554	36	6.50%	4	9	13	\$50,404	Bachelor's degree
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers & Other Ag Managers	50,597	-253	-0.50%	0	862	862	\$67,928	Long-term on-the-job training
45-2092	Farmworkers & Laborers, Nursery & Greenhouse	10,903	1,426	-13.08%	0	290	290	\$27,903	Short-term on-the-job training
Power Structural & Technical Systems									
49-3041	Farm Equipment Mechanics	2,273	206	9.06%	21	54	75	\$37,642	Postsecondary vocational award
45-2091	Agricultural Equipment Operators	1,598	56	3.50%	6	43	49	\$31,459	Moderate-term on-the-job training
49-3031	Truck Mechanics & Diesel Engine Specialists*	967	146	15.07%	15	17	32	\$46,120	Postsecondary vocational award
17-3023	Electrical & Electronic Engineering Technicians*	971	-22	-2.24%	0	24	24	\$65,147	Associate degree
15-1151	Computer User Support Specialists*	687	102	14.87%	10	8	18	\$51,069	Associate degree
15-1152	Computer Network Support Specialists*	194	29	14.63%	3	3	6	\$66,038	Associate degree
49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics*	121	4	3.36%	0	3	3	\$55,437	Postsecondary vocational award

Note: * Share in the Agribusiness Industry.

Note: Food preparation workers including chefs and cooks are not included in this analysis. They play key roles within the Food Products and Processing Systems Pathway, but work predominantly within the hospitality and culinary sector.

Source: IL Dept. of Employment Security, Economic Information & Analysis Division