



For Immediate Release

April 30, 2026

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New Research Agenda Supports Sustainable Agriculture in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Region

(CHICAGO, IL) – The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers (GSGP) today released the *Great Lakes St. Lawrence Sustainable Agriculture Research Agenda*, a regional resource created to guide collaborative research, spur innovation, and strengthen agricultural sustainability and resilience.

The release of the Research Agenda is a key milestone of the [Great Lakes St. Lawrence Sustainable Agriculture Initiative](#), which was launched at GSGP’s 2025 Leadership Summit.

The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Sustainable Agriculture Research Agenda is available at www.gsgp.org/projects/sustainable-agriculture/

Chaired by Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Director Dr. Tim Boring, the initiative reflects a shared commitment by the eight States and two Provinces to address critical agricultural challenges that reach across borders and require a coordinated regional approach.

The region’s agricultural sector contributes more than \$1 trillion (US) to the economy, employs over 6.5 million people, and supports one of North America’s most diverse and productive agricultural systems. At the same time, producers across the region face increasing uncertainty driven by extreme weather, rising production costs, labor shortages, market volatility, and emerging environmental risks. The Research Agenda serves as a guide for future research and decision-making in response to these challenges.

Rather than replacing or duplicating existing efforts, the Research Agenda is designed to elevate and connect decades of agricultural research already underway. Over the years, the region’s States, Provinces, universities, non-profit organizations, and other institutions have led efforts to

advance sustainable agriculture. The Agenda builds on this strong foundation by identifying shared research priorities, aligning information needs across jurisdictions, and laying the groundwork for a regional framework that amplifies the impact of ongoing and future work in support of agriculture today and for generations to come.

“The Regional Research Agenda serves as a roadmap for how the Great Lakes St. Lawrence region can lead in sustainable agriculture,” said **Tim Boring, Director, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and Chair of the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative**. “This work will fill the identified research needs across States and Provinces in a way that will elevate the entire region. Through this collaborative effort, we’ll be able to improve farm sustainability, increase access to fresh and healthy products, and accelerate innovation and resiliency in our regional food system while protecting our natural resources for future generations.”

Developed by a multi-State and Provincial Committee composed of Departments and Ministries of Agriculture, and informed by regional stakeholders, the Research Agenda identifies cross-cutting challenges facing producers and the broader agricultural sector.

The Agenda outlines five priority research areas:

- **Supporting Technological Innovation and Crop Diversification** to increase food security, mitigate risk, and improve resiliency.
- **Building Resilient and Transparent Supply Chains** to strengthen economies, enhance trust in the food system, and reduce vulnerability to disruptions.
- **Assessing the Effectiveness of Conservation Practices and Programs** to better understand environmental outcomes across diverse landscapes.
- **Understanding Social, Behavioral, and Economic Drivers of Producer Adoption of Sustainable Practices** to improve program design, decision-making, and implementation.
- **Developing Strategies to Address Contaminants of Emerging Concern** to foster coordinated regional approaches to emerging risks.

Together, these priorities are designed to support a more sustainable and resilient agricultural sector while advancing shared goals for soil health, water quality, water management, economic vitality, and healthy communities.

About GSGP (www.gsgp.org)

GSGP unites the chief executives from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania, Québec, and Wisconsin. The Governors and Premiers work as equal partners to grow the region’s \$9.3 trillion (US) economy and protect the world’s largest system of surface fresh water. This partnership builds upon forty years of work by the Council of Great Lakes Governors to encourage and facilitate environmentally responsible economic development.

QUOTES FROM SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE INITIATIVE MEMBERS

“Illinois is proud to partner on sustainable agriculture efforts,” **said Jerry Costello II, Director, Illinois Department of Agriculture.** “This Research Agenda helps identify practical solutions to the challenges farmers face every day. By working together, we can strengthen our agricultural economy, protect our natural resources, and support farmers now and in the future.”

“Teamwork is essential to improving water quality, and the regional approach championed by the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers is a model for how local leadership can drive broad, lasting impact,” **said Don Lamb, Director, Indiana State Department of Agriculture.** “I’m incredibly proud of Indiana’s conservation team and the role we play in this shared effort. Together, we look forward to advancing the research and innovation that will strengthen agriculture across our region.”

“Agriculture doesn't stop at state or national lines, and neither should our research,” **said Thom Petersen, Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture.** “Through this regional partnership, Minnesota is proud to work alongside our Great Lakes partners to turn shared challenges into shared successes. By making investments in sustainable ag, we are protecting our water quality, boosting our farm economy, and ensuring that the Great Lakes St. Lawrence region remains a global leader in productive, sustainable farming.”

“I always say that things just seem to work better when we work together, and the Regional Research Agenda is a terrific example,” **said Richard A. Ball, Commissioner, New York State Agriculture and Markets.** “New York is proud to join forces with our regional state and provincial partners in advancing our shared priorities in the areas of research, innovation, conservation, agricultural sustainability, and more. Through this collaborative effort across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River region, we are investing in a stronger agricultural community and a more resilient future for our industry.”

“We are proud to be part of this regional effort to strengthen agriculture and protect our natural resources,” **said Brian Baldrige, Director, Ohio Department of Agriculture.** “Through the successes of our H2Ohio water quality initiative, we’ve seen firsthand how collaboration and research can lead to real improvements in water quality and farm sustainability. The Regional Research Agenda builds on that momentum by aligning our shared priorities across state and provincial lines. Working together, we can give producers the tools they need to manage risk, adopt proven practices, and keep our agricultural economy strong for future generations.”

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“The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Sustainable Agriculture Initiative brings us together around a shared commitment to the future of agriculture in the region,” said **Honorable Trevor Jones, Minister, Ontario Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness**. “By aligning our work in the Research Agenda, we can better support producers as they navigate risks and uncertainty while building on the strong work already underway.”

“Under Governor Josh Shapiro's leadership as Chair of GSGP, we are grateful for the chance to work with Ag leaders across the Great Lakes region to help support farmers, drive innovation, and enhance resilience across all of our diverse agricultural sectors,” said **Russell Redding, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture**. “These initiatives build on the work we've done in Pennsylvania under the Shapiro Administration to create the first Ag Innovation grant program in the nation, strengthen our research partnerships with Pennsylvania universities, invest more in soil health and conservation programs, and increase efforts to expand local and regional food systems. Together, this unified approach will deliver practical, science-based benefits that extend beyond state lines, ensuring a more competitive and sustainable future for regional agriculture.”

“Quebec welcomes the opportunity to participate in this valuable collaboration with Ontario and the U.S. Great Lakes states, through the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers, consider this an important step in our shared commitment to support sustainable agriculture, strengthen our regional agricultural economy and contribute to food security for citizens throughout the region,” said **Donald Martel, ministre de l’Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l’Alimentation du Québec**.

“Wisconsin is proud to work alongside our Great Lakes partners to advance a shared vision for sustainable agriculture,” said **Randy Romanski, Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection**. “This research agenda strengthens our collective ability to support farmers, protect our land and water resources, and build a resilient regional food system.”

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