



Innovation Ecosystem 2025 Year-End Update

Digital and Precision Agriculture

With the critical support of the Iowa Legislature – and in partnership with [BioConnect Iowa](#) – Iowa State University of Science and Technology continues to forge new frontiers in innovation supporting the growth of Iowa's biobased economy.

KEY AREAS OF EMPHASIS

In 2025, the Digital and Precision Agriculture (DPA) innovation ecosystem emphasized activities in two key economic development areas:

- The platform leveraged previously seed-funded research and development to expand collaboration between Iowa State researchers and local AgTech companies, accelerating the commercialization of precision agriculture products and services across Iowa; and
- The platform launched a pilot program equipping high school educators with digital agriculture tools and curriculum, fostering the growth of a future-ready digital ag workforce.
- Increased strategic engagement with industry partners — supporting local AgTech startups with product testing and validation, connecting mid- and large-sized Iowa companies with new technology licensing opportunities, and cultivating interest from international firms exploring Iowa as a location for satellite offices and U.S. headquarters.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

- Advanced seven inventions toward market adoption through strategic intellectual property (IP) licensing.
- One patent application was initiated.
- Awarded one Innovation Fellowship to commercialize Iowa State-developed technology through a startup founded by a PhD graduate and university faculty member.
- Sustained a cross-disciplinary community of 41 researchers from 14 departments advancing digital and precision agriculture technologies.
- Funded training for 22 high school educators across 19 Iowa counties to deliver digital ag education to more than 300 students.
- Generated more than \$500,000 in external grants, more than \$300,000 from industry contributions, and more than \$40,000 in fee-for-service income for Iowa State.
- Catalyzed growth for more than 20 companies by supporting research expansion, market development, and talent acquisition in the state of Iowa.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND PRIORITIES FOR 2026

- Implement a reproducible process that will increase stakeholder feedback on critical agricultural challenges to guide research toward priorities that drive economic growth and industry competitiveness.
- Engage innovative farmers to accelerate on-farm technology adoption, strengthen Iowa's ag competitiveness, and create new market opportunities for emerging AgTech solutions.
- Explore the feasibility of offering technology-testing services that help early- and growth-stage AgTech companies validate products faster, strengthen their market readiness, and accelerate technology adoption across the state.

INNOVATE
at
Iowa State

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY POINTS OF CONTACT

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