

I-74 CORRIDOR AG REGION



AGRICULTURAL STRATEGY 2023



Rural Economic Development Model



RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Agriculture, as a leading Indiana economic sector, is shaped by world-renowned agribusiness firms, strong trade and membership organizations, productive farmers and soil, thoughtful and skilled leaders in public and private arenas, and innovative entrepreneurs. Agricultural strength is prevalent in the I-74 Corridor Ag Region, and the Task Force’s goal in implementing the Rural Economic Development Model is to identify the ag assets (raw materials) and resources that will help leaders to develop the policies, infrastructure, sites, and support needed to create long-term improvements in their rural economies.

The self-selected region analyzed data in an effort to discover their major agricultural assets in an effort to attract value-added agriculture — agribusiness and food-processing facilities and their connected supply chains — that fit with the Region’s capacity, vision and needs. The Rural Economic Development Model process focuses on understanding a region’s core clusters, outputs, supply chain, current policies, infrastructure, and sites that serve the unique needs of the targeted industries.

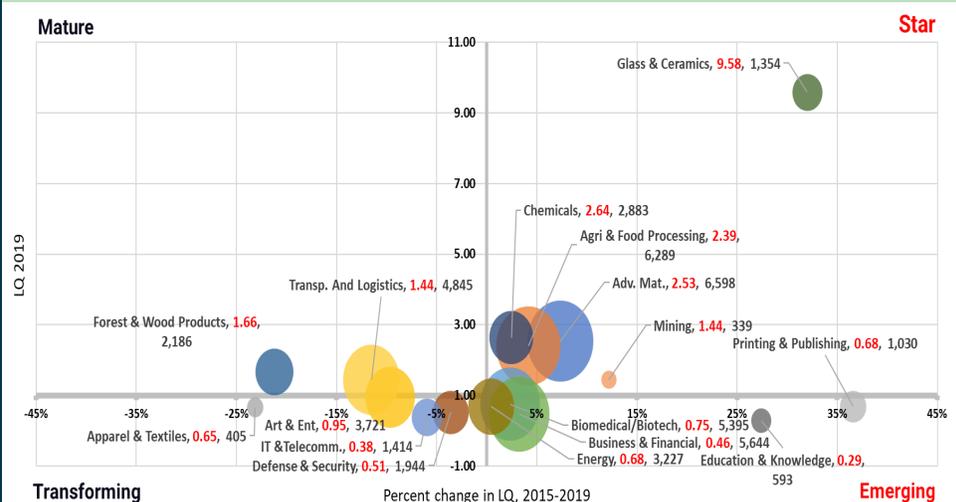
Industry Cluster Analysis and Location Quotients were employed to determine the economic competitiveness of the region. The Region had several competitive clusters, which included Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology, Advanced Materials, Chemicals, Glass and Ceramics, and Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing. All have potential connections and are providing support to the value-added supply chain of agriculture.

I-74 CORRIDOR AG REGION

The I-74 Corridor Ag Region (the ‘Region’) is comprised of the following six primarily rural counties in southeast Indiana:

- Dearborn County
- Decatur County
- Franklin County
- Ripley County
- Rush County
- Shelby County

I-74 Corridor Industry Cluster Analysis (2015–2019)



Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)



AG STRATEGY GOAL

The goal of the I-74 Corridor Ag Strategy is to build strong partnerships between economic development and agriculture.

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

- Add a new cold storage facility in the region.
- Increase meat processing.
- Increase the number of state-certified meat inspectors.
- Create one new hemp processing facility.
- Increase the number of individuals attending CDL training.
- Offer two ag workshops for farmers and agribusinesses.
- Create a central resource database for agribusinesses.
- Support the establishment of statewide incentives for agribusinesses.
- Increase the net export of ag products.
- Resurvey agribusinesses at the end of two years.

I-74 CORRIDOR AG STRATEGY

Through the data analysis and company interviews, the I-74 Corridor Task Force identified the following key strategies:

- 1. Develop a strong labor force for the ag industry.**
 - Develop programs to increase a pipeline of next generation ag workers that include a work ethic program, the development of Ag Education Centers in more schools, and the use of a workforce database for ag and seasonal workers.
 - Develop a program to help various cultures acclimate into the workforce and community.
- 2. Promote and expand the food supply chain to better connect with consumers.**
 - Expand opportunities for farmers to sell their products to schools through workshops on product diversification
 - Work with beginning farmers and military Veteran farmers to improve the local, small scale, and niche food supply chain.
- 3. Increase production and value-added processing of crops and livestock.**
 - Expand the distillery and whiskey industries, and wood mill working in the region.
 - Increase crop and livestock diversification, regional meat processing, hemp processing, cold storage warehousing capacity, and the availability of commercial kitchens and co-packing facilities.
- 4. Improve the region's transportation, broadband, and energy infrastructure.**
 - Improve rail infrastructure and road capacity, increase the number of drivers with CDLs, and make broadband more accessible across the region.
 - Evaluate solar and biomass energy as opportunities for farm diversification.
- 5. Enhance the regulatory and policy environment for agriculture and agribusiness.**
 - Encourage the development of local and state incentives and improve the regulatory environment and permitting processes for ag and food processing.

I-74 CORRIDOR AG REGION TASK FORCE

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Local Match

The economic development offices in the six counties provided the local match required by the US EDA grant.

Strategy Document

The full I-74 Corridor Ag Strategy is available at: www.i74biz.com.

