



BioAg Gateway: Where Science Grows
A Proposal for Support of the Midwest BioLink Commercialization and Business Center

Project Introduction and Context

Dane County is one of the several areas in southern Wisconsin where devastating flooding resulted in economic distress for many communities during the weather events of June 2008. A viable strategy for long-range recovery and economic stability must apply the unique place-based assets and strengths of the region to advance new global economic opportunities. Perhaps most importantly, the approach must span the boundaries of communities, the public and private sectors, and disciplines to be truly cooperative and regional. This proposal introduces a project that characterizes an innovative, collaborative regional approach to economic development that is firmly grounded in the history and inherent competitive advantages of the region – the BioAg Gateway. The BioAg Gateway is a 350-acre BioAg commercialization and business center—focusing on growing BioAg business, and educating and engaging the region in the future of the ag and bio economies. A centerpiece of BioAg Gateway is the Midwest BioLink Commercialization and Business Center - a facility designed to advance productivity, innovation, and entrepreneurship focusing on existing regional strengths in bio, agriculture and food sciences.

Mission

BioAg Gateway’s mission is to promote the growth, quality and commercialization success of the bio and agricultural industry in Madison, the state of Wisconsin, and throughout our region. As a place where industry-leading talent in agriculture, biotechnology, food science, and sustainability intersect, we continually seek ways to help businesses and collaborative partners achieve and promote their full scientific, economic and social potential.

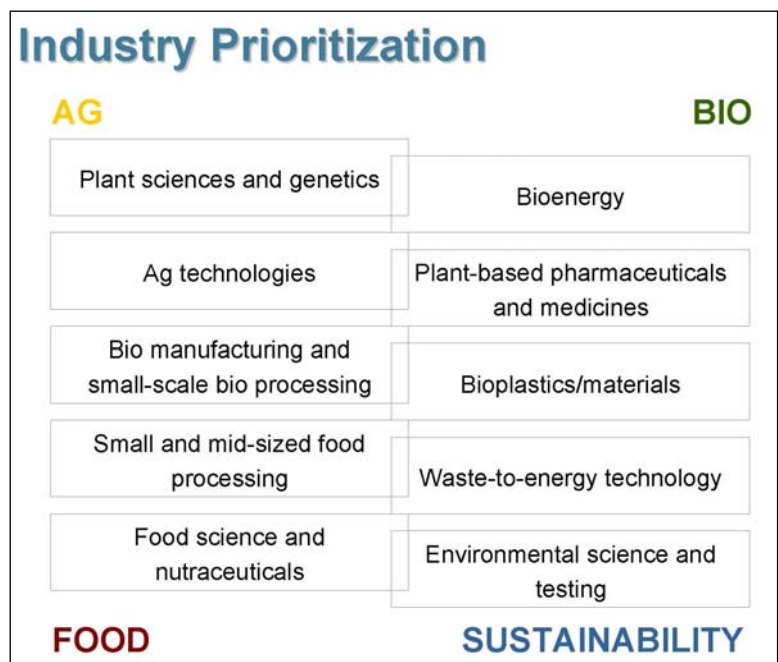
Industry Focus

This project prioritizes industry at the intersection of agriculture, biotechnology, food science and sustainability – integrating those that make sense to the region based on our existing competitive advantages to advance business development and job growth throughout the Midwest.

Components

The BioAg Gateway project includes the Midwest BioLink Commercialization and Business Center, an improved business park, a 200-acre agricultural and field test plot showcase, and a future agricultural discovery center.

The Midwest BioLink Commercialization and Business Center will feature experimenting and prototyping flex space, secure and controlled environment facilities, plant science commercialization greenhouse, wet lab/office space, pilot processing, conference and meeting space, and business service facilities serving the agriculture, biotechnology and corporate research and development communities in advancing new business ideas, intellectual property, incubating ag/biotech businesses and developing marketable products. It serves as a



catalyst for the development of a strategically positioned BioAg research and business park cluster at Madison's southeastern gateway—aligning perfectly with Dane County's economic role as the region's Wellspring of innovation, knowledge and ideas.

Location – *Positioned for Success*

The BioAg Gateway is ideally positioned on a key southeast Madison site, at the junction of Interstate 39/90 and State Hwy. 12/18. This regional transportation hub connects Chicago and Milwaukee to Madison and Minneapolis, and lies at the nexus of the region's agricultural and bio-based assets. With over 100,000 cars from throughout the country passing by the site every day, the BioAg Gateway provides a regional opportunity to solidly and visibly position Wisconsin as a BioAg leader in the new economy.

History

The Wisconsin BioAg Gateway area is presently home to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, the State Department of Hygiene, and over 20 agricultural, biotech and biomedical businesses. The area was named the World Dairy Center nearly two decades ago as a centerpoint for the world dairy industry and to grow agriculture-related commerce. The project was led by local investors, entrepreneurs and the State of Wisconsin under the leadership of former Governor Tommy Thompson.

Building off the past investments, this project propels the region into the new future of agricultural and bio economies.

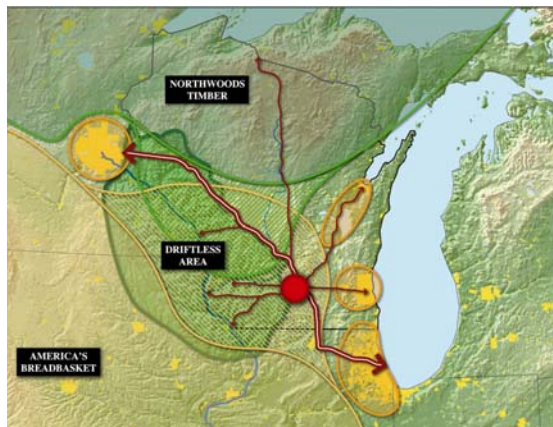
Why?

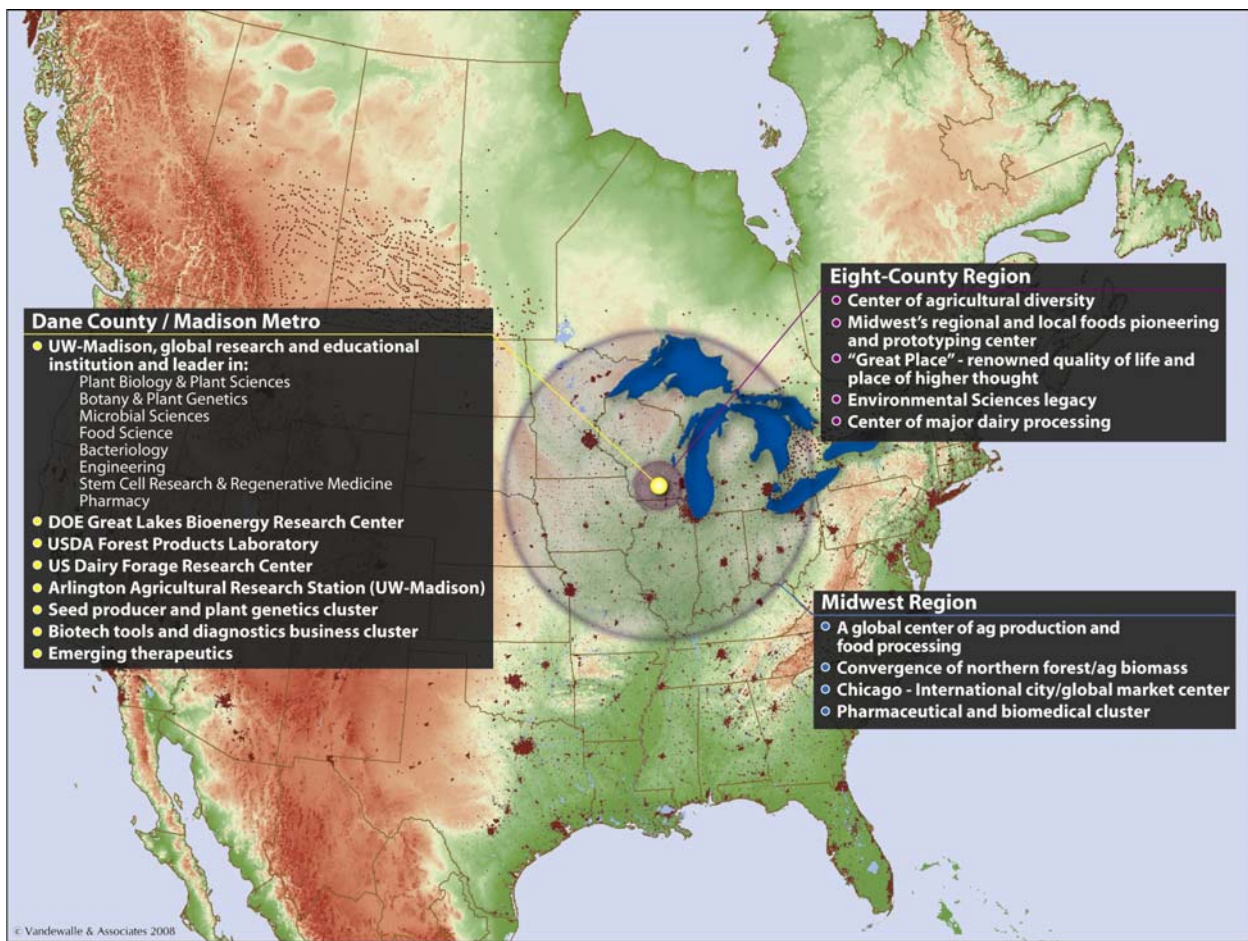
“Madison, Wisconsin is the only metropolitan area with a specialized job concentration in all four bioscience subsectors (agricultural feedstock and chemicals, drugs and pharmaceuticals, medical devices and equipment; and research, testing and medical laboratories.” (Battelle, 2006)

Capitalizes on the Region's Strengths

Wisconsin's unique biodiversity, superior research institutions, and diverse bio-based industries position the state to be a national leader in the bioeconomy. The region is a center of agricultural diversity, a regional and local foods pioneering center, renowned in dairy processing, and has a strong legacy of environmental leadership. In Dane County and the Madison Metro area there are strong clusters of seed production and plant genetics, biotech tools and diagnostics clusters. The University of Wisconsin, as a national leader in biotechnological and plant science research, is producing advancements that are helping shape this emerging economy for the nation. Such advancements in biotechnological research will become the foundation of the bioeconomy, which will be rooted in the fields of biomedicine, bioagriculture, bioenergy, and new materials. The University of Wisconsin and WARF are among the nation's leaders in the number of plant sciences patents held.

BioAg Gateway and the Midwest BioLink Commercialization and Business Center are intended to strengthen and expand industry clusters, as well as to function as an economic driver by creating a physical space to link our assets - ideas to products; innovation to job creation; and the University, State and private businesses from throughout the State to each other to maximize their individual impact for greater collective success as a region.





Fill the Gaps

There is no doubt that the region has great strengths and competitive advantage, however the region needs to do an even better job of supporting its strong clusters and developing new ones, facilitating business creation and growth, and supporting the commercialization of ideas within the region.

The project and facility grew in part from a need for commercialization greenhouse space in the region to advance public and private plant science technologies to businesses. To date, no green house facility space exists in our state to help researchers move to the next level – to advance intellectual property, incubate ag biotech businesses and develop marketable products. The Midwest BioLink Commercialization and Business Center can provide the necessary business incubation for plant sciences, just as the MG&E Innovation Center at the UW Research Park has done for biotechnology. This facility will be needed to advance Wisconsin's role in the bioeconomy.

The region could also improve its ability to retain and attract talent. Affiliated with the University, WARF, DATCP, and private sector industries, the Midwest BioLink Commercialization and Business Center will help retain and recruit leading plant and biotech researchers, providing faculty and corporations the opportunity to guide basic research through production.

Implementation of the Regional Economic Vision

BioAg Gateway and the Midwest BioLink Commercialization and Business Center go far beyond creating high-skill and high-wage jobs in Dane County. BioLink will create a regional centerpoint for bio, ag and good science commercialization, prototyping and idea exchange – which translates to business and job creation and growth throughout the region.

Thrive, an economic development entity serving Dane County and the seven surrounding counties, recently identified several strategic opportunities for the region as part of an Asset and Opportunities Analysis. The

opportunities were created to build off the region's place-based assets, while aligning with and advancing global futures. The Midwest BioLink Commercialization and Business Center would be catalytic for the region in directly advancing and aligning with four of the eight key opportunities identified, including:

- Strengthen the region's leadership role in advancing the bioeconomy;
- Scale up the regional food system and grow a large scale and specialty product and processing export economy;
- Advance the region as a knowledge and convening center connection, translating and integrating ideas to help regional and state businesses advance and compete globally;
- Test and lead global environmental and natural resources solutions; export technology, applications, systems approach, products and services.

Collaboration Center-Point

BioAg Gateway and the Midwest BioLink Commercialization and Business Center is intended to link individuals and organizations, providing a dynamic trailhead and networking businesses center for the integration of technologies and ideas to adapt, grow, and translate into businesses and jobs.

This project is the result of strong cooperation between the business sector, regional partners, and local, state and federal governments. Led by the City of Madison, regional collaborators to date have included:

- Madison Gas and Electric
- State of Wisconsin
- Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
- Wisconsin Department of Commerce
- Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation
- University of Wisconsin
- Madison Development Corp
- Thrive, the economic development entity serving Madison and the 8-County region
- Orbitec – private R&D corporation

