

PEORIA IS PLANT BASED

A Hub of Innovation and Sustainability



Central Illinois



Welcome to Greater Peoria's Bioprocessing Landscape

Nestled in the heart of Central Illinois, Greater Peoria represents the future of bioprocessing. This region, where agriculture's rich history meets technological innovation, is pioneering sustainable solutions that marry the earth's bounties with cutting-edge advancements. Explore how we're leading the charge in creating a sustainable future through our vibrant bioprocessing ecosystem.

Our Unique Advantages



USDA “AgLab”

The USDA’s National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research, known locally as “Ag Lab” is a key player in Greater Peoria’s innovation ecosystem, blending agricultural science with advanced technology to drive sustainable solutions. Its groundbreaking research transforms agricultural products into renewable resources, positioning Peoria as a leader in bioprocessing.



Fertile Grounds and Abundant Resources

Home to some of the world’s most productive soil and extensive water sources, our region is a natural choice for agriculture and bioprocessing.

Strategic Infrastructure

We boast a comprehensive logistics network, including railroads, highways, and an international airport, to ensure efficient connectivity for businesses. The Illinois River runs through the heart of Greater Peoria and provides a year-round connection to the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico.



Innovation Legacy

With a history rich in ingenuity, we offer the expertise and skilled workforce necessary for the bioprocessing sector to flourish.



Tech Hub Leadership

The Illinois Fermentation and Agriculture Bioprocessing Hub (iFab) has received a \$51 million grant, establishing Central Illinois as a leader in precision fermentation. Led by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, iFab will partner with regional industry giants like Alto Ingredients and Natural Fiber Welding. This investment drives innovation, benefiting Greater Peoria through cutting-edge research and new growth opportunities.



Startup Ecosystem

Legacy companies, research institutions, startups, and support agencies drive innovation in bioprocessing within Greater Peoria. Distillery Labs serves as the region’s hub for innovation, connecting to 14 universities via the Illinois Innovation Network. Peoria NEXT Innovation Center offers wet and dry lab space, while AgTech Connect meetings facilitate collaboration among innovators.

Economic Contributions: A Pillar of Industry



Greater Peoria's bioprocessing industry significantly impacts the local economy, showcasing its strength through impressive agricultural output and vast expanses of farmland dedicated to high demand crops.

In 2022 alone, the figures speak volumes about our region's capacity and its role as a key economic driver:

- **Total Agricultural Output:** An estimated 1,260,981 acres in the Peoria region provided a market value of agricultural products sold totaling approximately \$1.62 billion.
- **Corn Production:** 564,579 acres are dedicated to corn, a staple for both food and biofuel industries, driving vital sales and supporting bioprocessing.
- **Soybean Cultivation:** 496,998 acres contribute significantly to the economy through soybeans, essential for various industrial and consumer products.



AGNITOR Initiative

Launched in 2023 by the Illinois Agri-Food Alliance, the AGNITOR Initiative is a groundbreaking effort designed to spark youth interest in the diverse career opportunities available in agriculture, food, and natural resources. This initiative connects educators, after-school programs, and community organizations with the resources they need to inspire the next generation of industry leaders.



Illinois Extension and 4-H Programs

In collaboration with Illinois Extension, regional 4-H organizations offer extensive resources and curricula that integrate technology with agricultural education. Participants learn to use drones, robotics, and AI in crop science, agronomics, and animal care, equipping them with the skills necessary for modern agricultural practices.



Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom (IATC)

Supported by the Illinois Farm Bureau, IATC has been integrating agriculture into educational curriculums since 1981. By providing free resources, this program ensures that educators—whether in-person, virtual, or hybrid—are equipped to impart agricultural knowledge to students, fostering an early interest in agriculture careers.



Illinois Sustainable Ag Partnership & Community College Alliance for Agriculture Advancement (C2A3)

Illinois Central College (ICC) plays a pivotal role in these initiatives, which focus on exploring new agricultural markets and increasing the adoption of sustainable practices. These programs are vital for training the next generation of field practitioners and conducting applied regional research.



Comprehensive Educational Programs at Illinois Central College

ICC offers a rich array of hands-on educational opportunities through its Ag Programs & Associations. These include:

- ICC Collegiate Farm Bureau and Agribusiness Club: Offers leadership development and participation in competitions.
- Horticulture Club: Enhances learning through practical experience and professional networking.
- ICC Livestock Judging Team: A highly competitive team that ranks nationally, providing invaluable experiential learning.

Our Bioprocessing Industry Players and Their Strengths



Alto Ingredients, Pekin

Industry: Ethyl Alcohol, Ethanol

Operation Span: 40 years

Employees: 370

Specialty: Produces specialty alcohols, renewable fuel, and essential ingredients for health, beauty, food, beverage, and industrial markets.



Arxada, Mapleton

Industry: Medicinals and Botanicals

Employees: 95

Specialty: A global specialty chemicals company offering sustainable microbial control and specialty products for health, personal care, coatings, and wood protection markets.



Biourja Renewables, Peoria

Industry: Industrial Organic Chemicals

Employees: 150

Specialty: A climate-conscious alcohol distillation company producing spirits for major brands, industrial & consumer products, fuel ethanol to boost gasoline octane, and corn-based oils for renewable fuels.



Midwest Bioprocessing Center (MBC), Peoria

Industry: Biotechnical Research, Commercial

Operation Span: 11 years

Employees: 4

Innovation: Produces bio-based chemicals for health and nutrition using innovative bioprocess technologies, including rare sugars and cosmetic ingredients.



Natural Fiber Welding, Peoria

Industry: Textiles (Fashion, Automotive, Personal Goods)

Operation Span: 8 years

Employees: 200

Specialty: Pioneering the use of sustainable, plant-based materials like plastic-free leather alternatives and biobased outsoles for fashion, footwear, automotive, and more.



PMP Fermentation Products, Peoria

Industry: Industrial Organic Chemicals

Operation Span: 39 years

Employees: 50

Specialty: Produces and supplies biodegradable and biorenewable products like sodium gluconate, which are used in various industries to promote healthier lives worldwide.

Greater Peoria is home to a diverse array of bioprocessing companies, each contributing uniquely to the industry's landscape.



Evonik Corporation, Mapleton

Industry: Industrial Organic
Chemicals

Employees: 131

Specialty: Integral to products like tires, mattresses, medications, and animal feeds, contributing small but crucial amounts for enhanced performance and exemplifying the impact of specialty chemicals.



Ingredion Incorporated, Mapleton

Industry: Corn Starch

Employees: 66

Specialty: Transforms plant-based materials into value-added ingredients for food, beverage, brewing, and pharmaceutical industries, enhancing taste, texture, and nutrition.



Zuchem, Peoria

Industry: Sugar

Operation Span: 22 years

Employees: 7

Specialty: Develops eco-friendly processes to produce unique sugars and carbohydrates for health and nutrition industries.



Infrastructures & Support System

Our infrastructure and support systems are fundamental to our success. Institutions like the USDA National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research, Distillery Labs, and the Illinois Waterways Port Authority provide critical support and enhancements that enable our bioprocessing sector to thrive.



Highlight: Waterway System

Illinois has 1,095 miles of navigable waterways that either border or pass through the state. These waterways provide the state with connections to both the Atlantic Ocean (through the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Great Lakes) and the Gulf of Mexico (via the Mississippi). The port of Chicago offers terminals that handle ocean and lake vessels as well as barges.



A Vision for the Future

Greater Peoria is not just keeping pace --- we're setting the standard for a sustainable, plant-based future. Our rich agricultural landscape, combined with an innovative spirit and strategic location, positions us as a leader in the global shift toward bioprocessing.



Join Us in **Shaping a Sustainable Tomorrow**

We invite innovators, entrepreneurs, and companies to join our thriving bioprocessing ecosystem. Together, we can harness the power of sustainability to create a brighter, greener future.

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