

**SOMETIMES
OPPORTUNITY
LOOKS YOU RIGHT
IN THE FACE.**



**ADDING LIVESTOCK TO YOUR ILLINOIS CROP FARM
CAN HELP EXPAND THE FAMILY BUSINESS,
DIVERSIFY YOUR INCOME STREAM AND EVEN
IMPROVE YOUR SOIL.**



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Livestock adds value to your soybeans and the local economy.

The livestock industry makes up 5 percent of the Illinois economy. Animal agriculture also consumes 97 percent of all U.S. soybeans. By adding livestock to your operation, you build demand for the grain you produce and have a positive impact on your community's economy. More livestock in Illinois helps guarantee a market for your soybeans.

"If you look at what any livestock producer is doing, they are creating demand for their own products, corn and soybeans, and they're turning it into fertilizer. That would benefit any operation."

**—Clarke Kelso, hog and crop farmer,
Macomb, Illinois**





Adding livestock can help bring family members back to the farm.

Whether you're adjusting to changes in the commodity market or working to pass on your operation to the next generation, diversifying with livestock may be worth considering. Bringing a son or daughter back into the business can prove difficult in today's environment. With historically high land prices, expanding the farm may not be feasible, and without an additional income stream many young people are finding it difficult to return home to farm. However, diversifying a grain operation with livestock creates income and labor for the next generation to join the operation.

"I was a banker for seven or eight years ... and decided I wanted to come home to farm. Putting a pencil to it and comparing the high price of land and cash rent to feeding livestock ... we really thought adding cattle to our existing grain operation was the way to go."

**—Wes Strode, cattle and grain farmer,
Marietta, Illinois**



Integrators can help reduce risk and workload.

If you're worried about the ups and downs of the livestock market, an integrator can help. They take most of the risk, and many will work to find an agreement that suits your needs. Typically, they own the animals and pay you a regular, predetermined fee to rent your confinement space. The best part is you still own and control a very valuable asset for your crop acres: the manure. A list of livestock integrators can be found at ilsoy.org/animalag.

"During the '90s when hog prices were at an all-time low, those times make you appreciate a contract relationship. We have a steady source of income and minimize our risk. So we are able to have steady income to our farm and supplement other areas."

**—Genny Six, hog and crop farmer,
Chapin, Illinois**

Manure builds healthier soils and higher yields.

Manure provides environmental benefits that cannot be achieved with commercial fertilizer. Manure returns organic matter to the soil, providing many plant health benefits. According to Ted Funk, University of Illinois Extension Specialist, manure provides micronutrients and improves soil's water holding capacity. Such advantages may be why farmers can consistently achieve 10-15 bushels more per acre on ground that utilizes livestock manure.

"With the N-P-K in livestock manure, you have the potential to replace all of your commercial fertilizer costs."

—Ted Funk, Retired Extension Specialist,
University of Illinois

How much is liquid manure worth to Illinois farmers?

You may have heard others refer to manure as liquid gold, but how much is manure worth? Per Dr. Richard Gates, University of Illinois, the cash value of manure depends upon its nutrient content, the crop it is applied to, the storage and application methods, and current commercial fertilizer prices. Despite many variables, Gates estimates that the application of manure can provide a full value replacement credit of \$91-\$112/acre. He offers a set of spreadsheet tools on the Livestock Facilities and Manure Management website at <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/lfmm/nmp/> which allows users to enter their specific values.





WE CAN HELP YOU TAKE THE NEXT STEP.

If you're ready to take advantage of the benefits of livestock production, Illinois offers a variety of resources. The Illinois Livestock Development Group can guide you along the way and help you navigate the paperwork and applications. Contact Nic Anderson at 217-622-7491 or ildg@ilfb.org to get started.

Visit ilsoy.org/animalag for links to planning materials and other guides, or call 309-663-7692 to receive hard copies. Here you can access resources on everything from scouting a barn's location to calculating manure's market value.



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