

# FUTURE OF MIDWEST AGRICULTURE

## PLAUSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIOS

June 15-16, 2017

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

#### FUTURE OF MIDWEST AGRICULTURE - PLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS OF THE FUTURE

This scenario planning workshop was convened by the University of Minnesota, and facilitated by Future iQ. Close to 100 Midwest agriculture stakeholders participated in the workshop. The scenario narratives and descriptions were developed by the participants, and the axes reflect the drivers and themes they collectively judged as the most important for the future of the future of Midwest Agriculture.

**For more information on the Future of Midwest Agriculture project, please contact:**

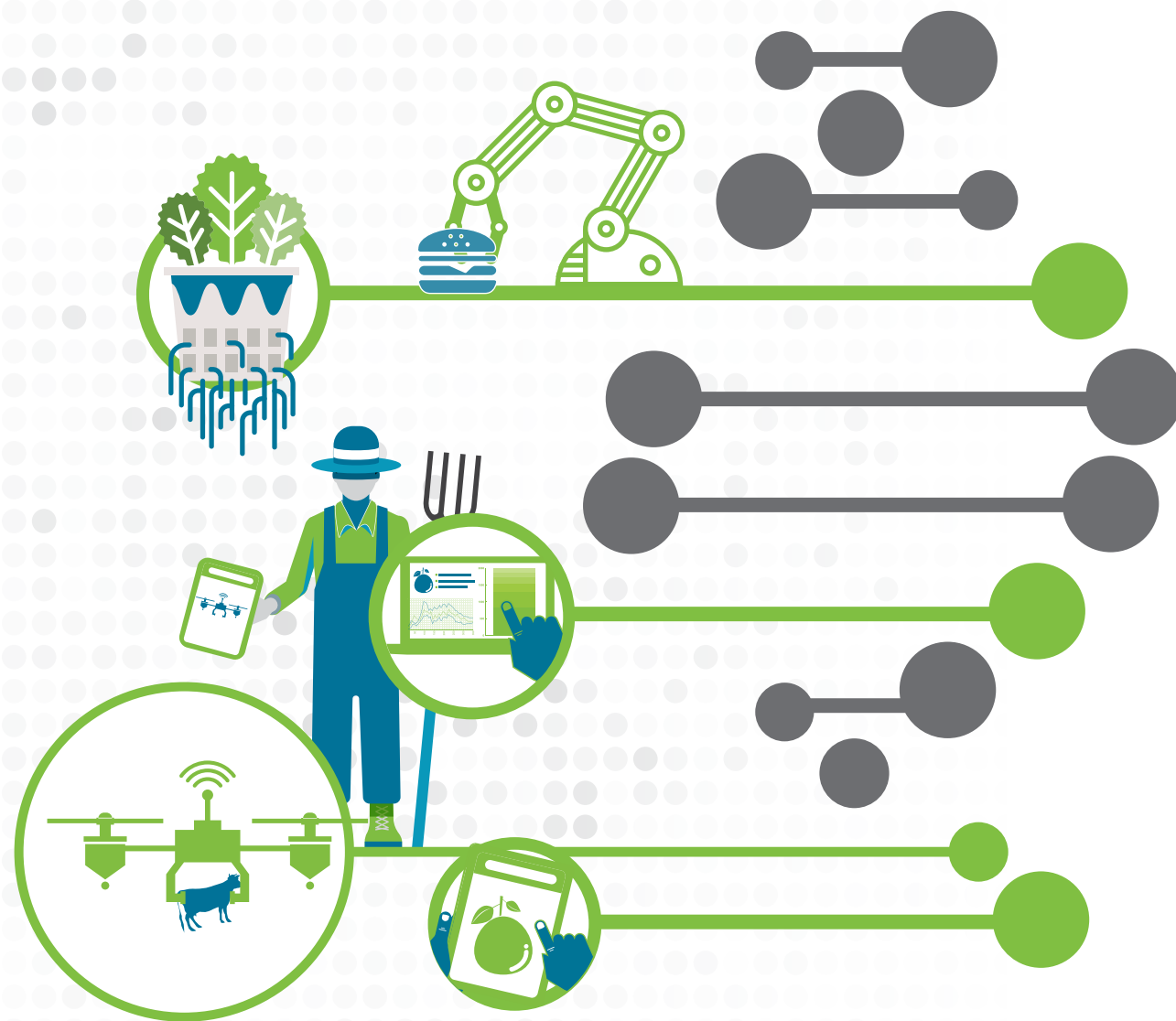


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# FUTURE OF MIDWEST AGRICULTURE

## SCENARIOS OF THE FUTURE

### SCENARIO DESCRIPTIONS



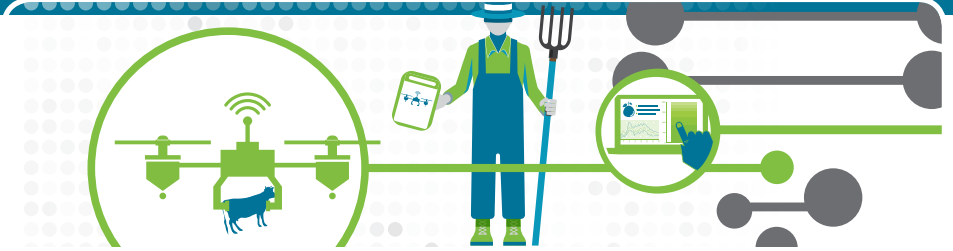
#### SCENARIO A: LOCAL ECOTOPIA - 2040

- Resilient regional ecosystem health
- Strong focus on local resource control and influence
- Diverse crops, healthy soil, and integration of livestock
- Food grown and processed regionally
- Growth + processing in closed loop systems with zero environmental impact
- Consumers lead transparency trend
- Full transparency from seed to final product destination
- Public private partnerships structured to allow for thriving co- op model
- Farm transfer increase. Farmer average declines
- Strong focus on equity and civic engagement



#### SCENARIO D: HEADING DOWN AND OUT - 2040

- Local control and influence coupled with a strong focus on production
- Increased relevance and size of regional food processing centers
- Regional food processing centers as sole hub of jobs in rural communities
- Disappearance of smaller rural towns
- Labor, housing, and infrastructure shortages in regional centers
- Push for better infrastructure surrounding regional centers
- Universities retooling programs to meet labor shortages
- Environmental protection demands from consumers
- Production needs don't allow for effective environmental response
- Producers will choose to bypass local demands by targeting global markets
- Decrease of water quality, quantity, and soil quality
- Increase of dead zones downstream and decrease in aquatic ecosystems
- Exponential increase in use of technology
- Food grade Increase
- Growth of small niche urban farms
- Prevalent self- regulatory bodies
- Growth of farm certification programs



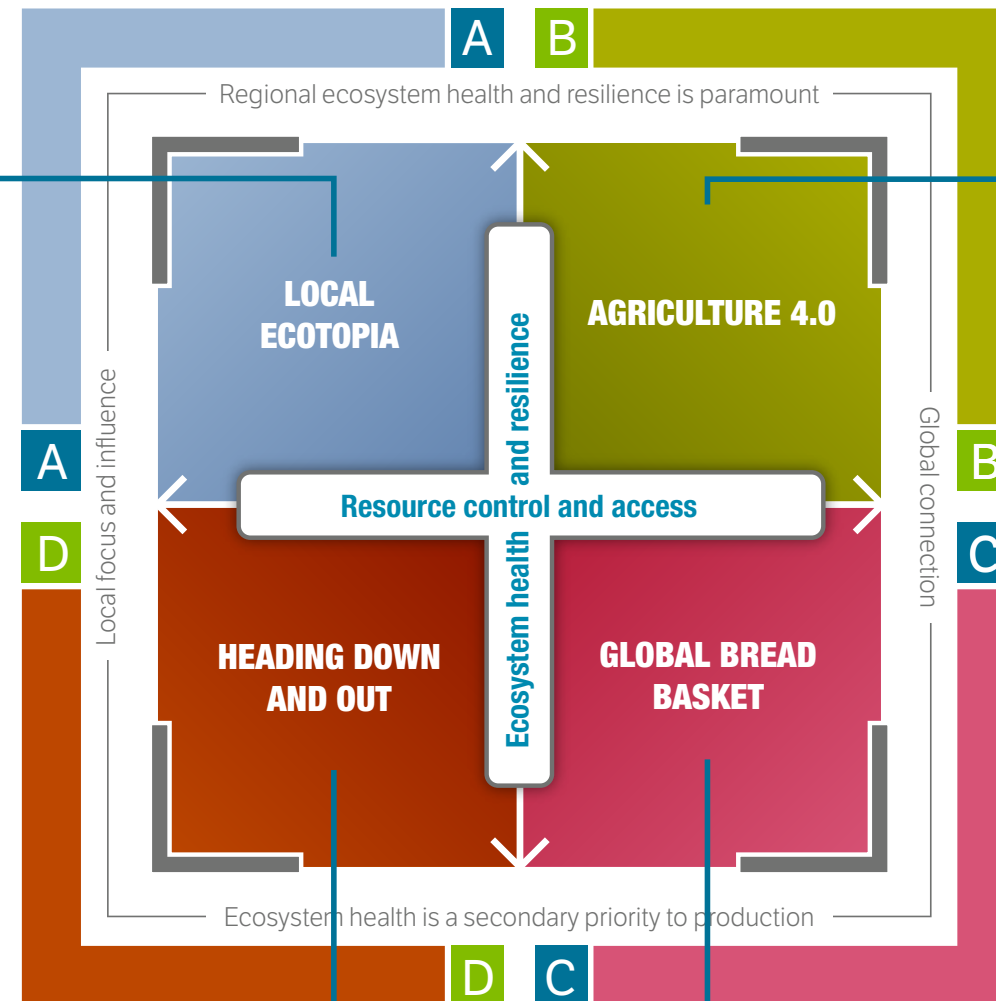
#### SCENARIO B: AGRICULTURE 4.0 – 2040

- Global focus and connectivity
- Resilient ecosystem health
- Corporate responsibility as foundational block
- Dual tracked system: local products for regional consumption and global structure for global marketplace
- Local consumer: high level of customization
- Global marketplace: provide local farmers a stable and established demand
- Precision farming - more intelligent and sustainable production system
- Corporations incentivized to be environmentally conscious
- Cover crops eventually defining the landscape
- Increased demand of protein rich alternative crops
- Vigorous watersheds
- Rural communities - strong workforce development efforts by public-private partnerships



#### SCENARIO C: GLOBAL BREAD BASKET – 2040

- Focus on global demand
- Strong focus on production
- Industry shift toward calorie and protein rich foods and away from fresh foods
- Highly processed and automated production and distribution
- Corporate ownership of farms
- Disappearance of food industry family farms
- Investment in soil health to sustain production
- Notable divergent split in farm sizes - very small or very large
- Demand in animal agriculture
- Notable increase in private sponsorship of research and private ownership of information
- Increased transparency in the system from environmental landscape pressure
- Thriving regional centers with available jobs and education opportunities
- Small rural communities - obsolete and start to disappear



The scenario descriptions were developed by Future of Midwest Agriculture workshop participants. The descriptions represent the expected future for Midwest Agriculture, based on the associated conditions defined by the axes.

