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## FUTURE PATHWAYS FOR MIDWEST AGRICULTURE: PREFERRED AND PERILOUS FUTURES

A Collaborative Project of the University of Minnesota and Future iQ

### The University of Minnesota and Future iQ are collaborating to explore the future of U.S. Midwest agriculture.

Future climate scenarios pinpoint the Upper Midwest as a globally crucial source of food, water, and energy by 2100. The region contains some of the planet's best soils, and the Great Lakes represent 20% of the world's fresh water. Midwest agriculture is in a dynamic phase. Demand for traditional agricultural commodities is increasing, and sustainably-sourced commodities and products are becoming an important market sector. Also, a new, more broadly-based agricultural "bioeconomy" is emerging, which builds on the strengths of current agriculture by integrating new crops for a wide range of new bio-based products. More broadly still, water and water-related services are expected to become an increasingly important economic sector, in which agriculture can participate profitably. These new and growing opportunities are affected by a range of threats, including uncertain policy, markets, and climate.

In this project, the future of Midwest agriculture will be explored by multi-sector participatory scenario-building activities. The process will include a Think Tank, focus groups, interviews, rapid polling, stakeholder surveys and data visualization, and regional follow-on activities. The goal is to identify plausible future pathways for Midwest Agriculture and clarify pathways to preferred futures, while highlighting pathways to perilous futures. The project will build on previous studies on futures for Midwest agriculture. These studies are now outdated; as well, it is now critical to take a broadly global and market-focused view. Project outcomes include development of an innovation strategy that leverages growing market opportunities for food, agricultural products, and water, while managing key risks and sustainability challenges.

#### University of MN Future of Midwest Agriculture Think Tank

Save the Dates: 15-16 June 2017

**Location:** University of Minnesota  
Continuing Education and Conference Center  
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