

## LOCATIONS FOR THE AGRIBUSINESS INDUSTRY

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innovation as Missouri, it's hard to not get the results you're looking for. Agtech research takes place across the entire state in the state's innovation communities, growing companies and leading world-class educational institutions. Missouri boasts several exceptional resources to utilize, including: crop and livestock diversity, abundant water supply, rich soil and cutting-edge animal health and plant science clusters.

When you expand or move your agtech or agritech company to the Show-Me state, you increase your chances of achieving your long-term goals. We know how critical it is that the foundation you build your business or research institution on is sound, structured and conducive to success. With more than half of the world's animal health industry sales represented in the Kansas City region alone, and several more dynamic animal health and plant science clusters operating statewide, you'd be hard-pressed to find a better place to grow.

World-Leading Innovation With a Local Touch. Why choose Missouri if you're in the agriculture industry? Maybe it's because agriculture is an \$88 billion industry in Missouri. Maybe it's because more than 378,000 employees keep the state's agtech economy brimming with fresh, engaged talent and innovation. It might even be because so much agricultural product is shipped via river barge from the St. Louis region that a 15-mile section of the Mississippi is known as the "Ag Coast of America." Why wouldn't you want to work somewhere that puts this much thought, effort and resources into making this industry a world-leader?

It's Time To Meet Your Future Neighbors. In Missouri, we're proud that so many leading agtech organizations call our great state, home. With facilities including the Danforth Plant Science Center, Bayer Crop Science, the Missouri Botanical Garden, Yield Lab, Corteva

Agriscience, BASF, Bunge North America, KWS, Zoetis, AgriLabs, Boehringer Ingelheim and many more, it's a no-brainer to make your dream move a reality.

Missouri is also home to the headquarters of Rabo Agrifinance: they provide extensive financing and insurance options for U.S. farmers, ranchers and agricultural businesses. And many international companies have established their North American headquarters here.

In Missouri, the future of agtech is happening today. Big data, smart farming, input optimization, precision ag, biologicals, breeding, green chemistry, green pharmaceuticals, intellectual capital, an extensive agtech infrastructure, investors ... it's all growing in the Show-Me state.

### GADSDEN-ETOWAH COUNTY, AL: THE PERFECT PLACE TO GROW

Start with hydroponic farming and home-grown herbal teas; move to craft beer and boutique wine; then add one of the world's largest, most technologically advanced grain storage facilities; and include two major deboning plants and three major cold storage facilities—all strategically placed to utilize a logistically located transportation network comprised of rail, air and highways—and you will understand what makes Gadsden, Alabama the perfect place for the Agriculture Industry to locate.

Etowah County, AL is located along the Norfolk Southern Railway and Interstate Highway 59. Gadsden is an hour northeast of Birmingham, AL and 90 miles southwest of Chattanooga, TN. Etowah County and its county seat Gadsden offer a unique value proposition for those in the agricultural business. Gadsden was founded as an industrial city, but its southern location along the Coosa River and in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountain chain provides the fertile soil and long growing season that makes it an ideal location for any agricultural endeavor.

This geographic advantage extends to

logistics and transportation. Gadsden is strategically located in the Southeast. These location advantages led The Gadsden-Etowah Industrial Development Authority (IDA) to identify food and farming as one of its six targeted industries.

"People may stop driving cars, but they're not going to stop eating," said David Hooks, Executive Director of the Gadsden-Etowah IDA. "Agribusiness employs a lot of people, and it's a heavy generator for our economy, so we've added it to our mix for industrial development."

For generations, Gadsden has maintained a robust agricultural base, which ramped up as the other industries drew down. The region now has 93 agricultural entities, including major poultry operations that employ thousands of workers. In 2019, Koch Foods increased its Alabama footprint with a \$55 million grain storage and distribution facility. The property is one of the largest and most technologically advanced facilities of its type in the entire world. Southern Cold Storage of Alabama maintains a 103,000-square-foot cold storage facility in the county, sited on a 90-acre Tyson Foods development, which puts chicken into final packaging and stores poultry until it is shipped all over the world. There are two other cold storage facilities in the county: Americold and Millard Refrigerator Services.

Further, the local workforce is cited as one of the area's best resources for the agricultural industry. Jacksonville State University, University of Alabama-Gadsden Center and Gadsden State Community College all have agricultural programs from which businesses can draw talent. Recruitment across all business sectors has been bolstered by the Alabama Industrial Development Training Program and the Alabama Technology Network.

The Gadsden-Etowah IDA can help companies locating in the county to coordinate training and incentive programs.

"Ag businesses that provide value-



Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey and Gadsden-Etowah Executive Director, David Hooks at the 2019 groundbreaking of Koch Foods' \$55 million high tech grain storage and distribution facility in Etowah County. The 130-acre facility will have the ability to hold more than 1 billion bushels of corn.

add services get similar incentives to manufacturers," said Hooks. "There is a combination of incentives and tax exemptions available from state and local governments."

From large agriculture enterprises to small family producers; the local food-based economy includes numerous local farms, brewers and vineyards that are fluent in the farm-to-table ecosystem that is booming across the country.

Etowah County has the smallest landmass of any county in the State of Alabama. Due to the volume of the agricultural business done in Gadsden and Etowah County, one would anticipate large massive farms with large swaths of acreage; however, the inverse is true—85 percent of the farms are under 200 acres, with 55 percent under 50 acres. This has provided for small family-owned farms to thrive throughout the area. Traditional small family-owned farms, such as the Umphrey's Farm that grows produce from Arugula to Zucchini, enjoy enormous success bringing their products to market in local restaurants and at the City of Gadsden's 5th Street Market downtown. Norris Farms grows products similar to

PHOTO: GADSDEN-ETOWAH IDA

Umphrey's and has a fabulous "pick your own" marketing program that ranges from strawberries in early summer to pumpkins in the fall. The Forgotten Ways Farm focuses on traditional organic methods of farming, specializing in raw milk and grass-fed pastured meats. Owls Hollow Farm has focused on organic hydroponic gardening, and services the farm to table restaurant market within a 60-mile radius, which features several James Beard Award-winning restaurants and chefs.

And then there is that special niche, Distinctive Beverages, that has helped establish Gadsden as a player in the Food and Farming Sector.

Tea Town Alabama provides delicious loose-leaf teas made from simple, homegrown ingredients, paired with other locally grown herbs and fruits, and organically grown teas. Internet marketing has allowed others from all over the world to enjoy their teas.

When Back Forty Beer released its first offering, Naked Pig Pale Ale, the beer was only available in the North-Central Alabama home market, but the response was overwhelming. When Back Forty released their second brew, a national reputation followed—undoubtedly promoted by Truck Stop Honey Brown Ale award of a Silver Medal at the Great American Beer Festival. Growth for the brand has been effervescent since, allowing Back Forty to expand its coverage throughout Alabama and the Southeast. With the overwhelming support of the Gadsden community, Back Forty distributes beer from California to New York as well as internationally in Canada and China.

While not yet as well-known as its Craft Beer Industry, Etowah County's Wine Industry is catching up quickly.

Jahn and Janie Coppey established Wills Creek Vineyards in 1996 and opened the Winery in 2001. Jahn grew up in the Rhône valley of Switzerland in a family of vineyard owners and Janie's family had a history in farming. Planting

vineyards on the family's property was a perfect transition to grow muscadines and produce a variety of muscadine and vinifera wines.

The winery location provides tranquil views of the vineyards, mountains and the natural spring-fed pond. Today the winery produces about 2,000 cases of wine annually that includes muscadine from the vineyard and locally grown fruit wines like blueberry and strawberry. There are flavored grape wines as well as red and white vinifera grape wines.

Another local winery receiving national attention, Maraella Winery offers a wide range of classic varietals with old-growth vines growing deep in the Alabama earth. Each year their harvest brings excitement to the community and they continue to produce wine made from locally grown grapes and fruits, as they continue to introduce traditional viniferous grapes to the south.

Maraella's vintages continue to win awards. The 2010 Vintage was awarded Gold and Silver medals from Alabama to California. Their Cabernet Sauvignons and Rieslings have won Gold and Silver medals in competitions in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

The agriculture industry in Gadsden and Etowah County runs the gamut. Large food producers are some of the largest drivers of the local economy, and they continue to locate in Gadsden for good reason. Relationships with small farmers are woven deep into the fabric of the community where week after week you stop by the open-air local farmers market in the heart of Downtown Gadsden to buy a sun-ripened tomato from the farmer who picked it that morning. In Gadsden and Etowah, caring about food and farming aren't just jobs or industry, but a way of life.

For more information on doing business in Etowah County, email David Hooks, Executive Director of the Gadsden-Etowah IDA, at davidhooks@gadsdenida.org. 