



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | August 22, 2017

## **Congressional Delegation to Tour St. Louis to Learn about its AgMazing Impact on the Nation's Agriculture Chain**

*Tour Highlights Agricultural Progress and Collaboration in MO & IL*

ST. LOUIS – A delegation of congressional staffers representing districts from across the country are headed to St. Louis for the **2017 AgMazing Congressional Tour Wednesday, August 23 through Friday, August 25, 2017.**

Sponsored by the St. Louis Agribusiness Club and supported by BioSTL, the three-day tour will highlight the booming business of agriculture in the St. Louis metropolitan region, focusing on agriculture's role as an economic driver for the St. Louis region and country as a whole, as it provides feed, food, fuel and fiber in an efficient, safe and affordable manner.

In the 15-county St. Louis region, the agriculture industry contributes **\$18.6 billion** to the economy and supports nearly 179,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs according to a 2015 [study](#). St. Louis, recently deemed the "[Ag Coast](#)" of the nation for delivering the highest level of grain barge handling capacity anywhere along the Mississippi River, is the heartland of agriculture production, innovation and infrastructure that is vital to meeting the country's needs.

Some of that innovation is happening in the heart of the City, while you don't have to travel far to see farm production and infrastructure that supports the region and the nation. The 2017 AgMazing Congressional staffers will connect with farmers and business leaders to foster collaboration around the impact labor and immigration policy, infrastructure improvements, and regulatory issues have on the industry.

Over the course of three days, congressional staffers will see the value chain in action, from infrastructure and farms to research facilities and companies, like Purina and Anheuser-Busch.

"The ag industry, across a diverse value chain, feeds and fuels the world and is a primary economic driver for St. Louis, as well as the United States," said Matt Amick, board member of the St. Louis Agribusiness Club Missouri. "St. Louis gets a lot of attention for burgeoning technology, and a lot of that is happening in the ag space. St. Louis is a world-leading center for agriculture – from research to the field, through the distribution chain and onto our table and into our fuels – and we are proud to show that off to congressional staffers so that they become familiar with the needs and challenges of the agriculture industry."

[BioSTL](#), a leader and co-founder of the Innovation Advocacy Council, also champions ag and innovation policy at the national level and helps to bridge the urban/rural divide. BioSTL will lead a panel discussion at the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center at **1 p.m. Wednesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>**, highlighting St. Louis’s position as the plant science capital of the world. Panelists include representatives from:

- KWS, a German plant-breeding company that opened its North American headquarters in St. Louis;
- NewLeaf Symbiotics, a research and product development company that relocated from Boston to St. Louis; and,
- Apse, an agriculture crop protection and improvement startup backed by BioSTL’s investment arm, BioGenerator.

Together, the group will discuss the importance of plant science research and technology development in the areas of food security, crop improvement, sustainability and bioenergy. They also will highlight the importance of funding for research and creating opportunities for turning research into new companies as a key to success. For example, at BioSTL a federal i6 grant helped its investment arm BioGenerator to build Apse. And, the Small Business Administration was instrumental in helping St. Louis to build the [nationally-recognized bioscience cluster](#) that attracted both KWS from Germany and NewLeaf Symbiotics from Boston.

“Smart policies are critical to maintain the U.S. and St. Louis’ global leadership in agriculture, which includes funding for research and infrastructure and sound policy on regulatory framework, immigration and trade,” said Ben Johnson, VP of Programs at BioSTL. “We want our guests to leave with an understanding of the importance agriculture has on our economy and how St. Louis serves as a global leader across the value chain.”

Congressional staffers from the following states are joining the *AgMazing Tour*:

|             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| Alaska      | Missouri     |
| Hawaii      | New Jersey   |
| Illinois    | New York     |
| Maine       | Pennsylvania |
| Michigan    | Tennessee    |
| Mississippi | Texas        |

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## **Schedule:**

*\*Reporters are invited to join any part of the tour with a courtesy RSVP to Maggie Crane at 314.422.6783 or [mcrane@biostl.org](mailto:mcrane@biostl.org).*

## **Wednesday, August 23:**

### ***10 a.m. – Lock and Dam 25, 10 Sandy Slough Rd., Winfield, MO***

Infrastructure is critical to compete in a global market and yet infrastructure along U.S. waterways is crumbling, as evidenced by Lock and Dam 25. Funding for repairs is crucial to ensure that U.S. agriculture remains open for business to the world.

### ***1 p.m. – Donald Danforth Plant Science Center, New Theatre, 975 N. Warson Rd., St. Louis, MO***

Sam Fiorella, Danforth Center Chief Operating Office and BRDG Park President will deliver a brief history of the district and the impact on the region's ag innovation ecosystem. Topics include the 2018 Farm Bill, funding for basic research and bringing new products to market. Congressional staffers will tour labs and greenhouses to gain an understanding of how access to key infrastructure accelerates research, supports home-grown startups and attracts early and mid-stage companies to the region.

### ***2 p.m. – BRDG Park, 1005 N. Warson Rd., St. Louis, MO***

A panel will highlight St. Louis' position as the "plant science capital of the world" by discussing the importance of plant science research and technology development in the areas of food security, crop improvement, sustainability and bioenergy. Funding for this research and creating opportunities for turning research into new companies is a key to success.

### ***3:30 p.m. – Warren Stemme Farm, 165 River Valley Dr., St. Louis, MO***

Key topics of discussion will include the 2018 Farm Bill, regulatory reform and the importance of trade.

## **Thursday, August 24:**

### ***8:15 a.m. – Bunge-SCF, 651 N. Front St., East St. Louis, IL 62201***

Key topics will include infrastructure and the St. Louis region's role in the transportation of agricultural products at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers.

### ***10:15 a.m. – Elm Farms, 15542 Bottom Prairie Rd., Okawville, IL***

Elm Farms, which has row crop, cattle, hog and dairy operations, will focus on the challenges facing farmers from a production perspective in terms of regulations, market development, data and access to tools and technology.

### ***2:15 p.m. – Terayne Ag Specialties, 3911 State Route 15, Venedy, IL***

Discussion topics include regulatory challenges, crop insurance and small business needs.

### ***4 p.m. – Eckert's, 951 S. Green Mount Rd., Belleville, IL***

Eckert's will give the congressional staffers an overview of their experiences in the agri-tourism industry as well as labor and immigration concerns affecting their workforce.

## **Friday, August 25:**

### ***8:15 a.m. – Purina PetCare, 801 Choteau Ave, St. Louis, MO***

Focus will include an overview of Purina and its sustainability initiatives.

### ***10:45 a.m. – Anheuser-Busch Brewery, 12th and Lynch Sts., St. Louis, MO***

Following a tour of the facility, congressional staffers will learn about the grain procurement process and A-B's economic impact on the St. Louis region.

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### ***About St. Louis Agribusiness Club***

The St. Louis Agribusiness Club is comprised of more than 400 members representing farmers, researchers and agribusinesses and provides forums, educational opportunities and interactions to further important agriculture issues in the St. Louis region and beyond.

### ***About BioSTL***

BioSTL advances St. Louis' economic vitality by cultivating a strong bioscience and innovation ecosystem. BioSTL organizes business, university, and philanthropic leaders around a set of deliberate strategies that capitalize on St. Louis' strengths, especially in medical and plant sciences. The BioSTL mission is accomplished by deploying both human and financial capital to establish and execute effective strategies to grow the innovation economy. Focus areas include: building and investing in startups through its venture development arm, BioGenerator; improving access to investment capital; ensuring appropriate physical infrastructure such as labs, incubators and research districts; promoting science- and innovation-friendly public policy; fostering a more diverse and inclusive entrepreneurial talent pool in the region; and attracting the U.S. presence of international companies through GlobalSTL.

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## **CONTACT**

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