

# All About Illinois Agriculture and On-Farm Conservation

The majority of Illinois farms are classified as family farms – over **96%!**

In Illinois, agriculture is a top industry. Farmers across the state produce a variety of agricultural commodities, including soybeans, corn, swine, cattle, horseradish, pumpkins, flowers, and numerous other specialty crops and products. Illinois' agricultural commodities also help produce products such as animal feeds, wax, soap, paper, renewable fuels, and numerous others.

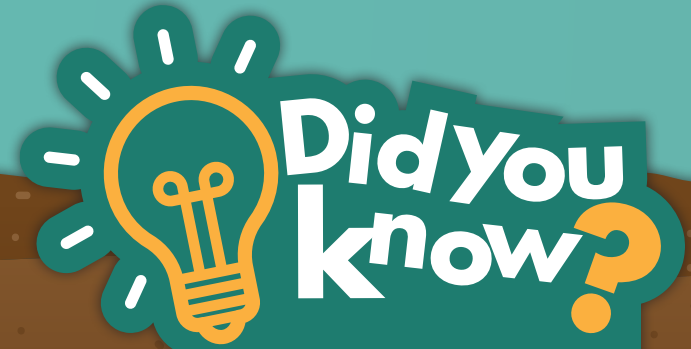
Farmers across Illinois are interested in a variety of conservation practices to ensure future generations can continue to farm. Farmers across Illinois employ a variety of practices to preserve water quality, build healthy soil, protect pollinators, and more.



## Soil Health

Did you know soil is a living ecosystem? It's true – soil slowly moves, changes, and grows all the time, requiring air and water to stay alive. The soil beneath you is home to organisms of all sizes, helping to decompose animal and plant matter, as well as cycle nutrients from the soil into the atmosphere.

Soil can store nutrients for future vegetation, helping to nourish plants, as well as provide habitat for soil organisms such as earthworms and millipedes.



**In Illinois, nearly 20 million acres are classified as reduced or no-till.**

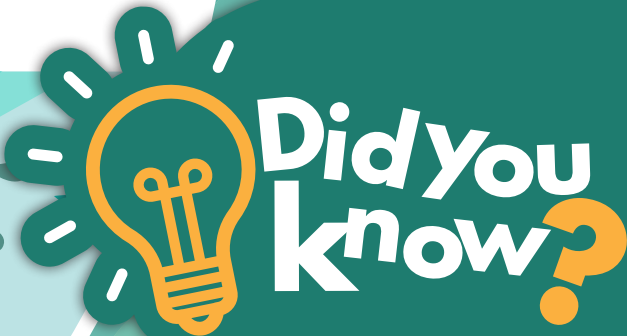
Illinois agriculture relies on healthy soils to store nutrients needed to grow crops for generations to come. Soil conservation practices including no-till, reduced-till, and cover crops decrease soil erosion and keep nutrients in the soil.



# Water Quality

## Water is an important resource to us all.

Farmers need water to help raise crops and livestock for the food we eat. Farmers use a variety of practices and technology to help improve water quality. For example, some farmers use strips of grass on the edge of fields to help filter water. Water is also an important resource in greenhouses. Farmers conserve water throughout the year by paying attention to temperatures, light levels, and crop production. Large water tanks also help to store water during peak rain seasons so that it can be used throughout the years.



# Pollinator Conservation



Pollinators are an important part of our food supply. Bees, moths, flies, butterflies, beetles, and even bats are responsible for one in every three bites of food we eat. Farmers care about pollinator survival and are actively working to reduce habitat loss. Pollinator-friendly plants and food sources can be incorporated onto farms and into grassed waterways, providing an additional source of pollinator habitat and food.



Illinois' State Insect is the Monarch Butterfly, one of several native pollinators found in the state. The Monarch Butterfly migrates through Illinois every year on its migratory journey to Mexico.

As Cook County's largest general farm organization, Cook County Farm Bureau® is dedicated to bridging the gap between farmers and urban consumers. Through education programs targeting youth and their parents and programs designed to connect farmers with potential consumers, Farm Bureau members are actively engaging in conversations about food and the shared values between farmers and consumers. To learn more about Cook County Farm Bureau, visit: [www.cookcfb.org](http://www.cookcfb.org). To learn more about Illinois Farm Bureau's statewide environmental initiatives, visit: [www.ilfb.org/Environment](http://www.ilfb.org/Environment)

