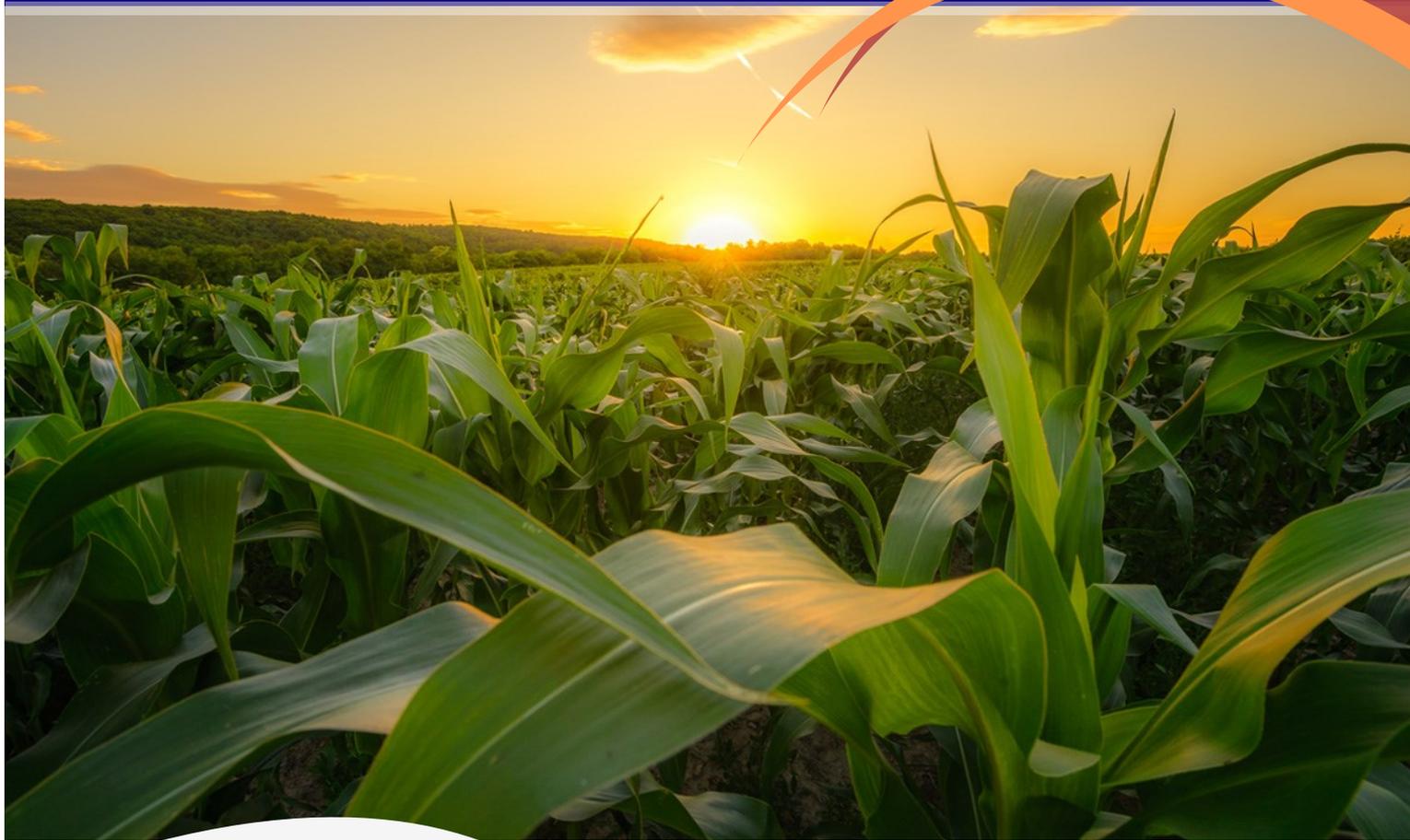
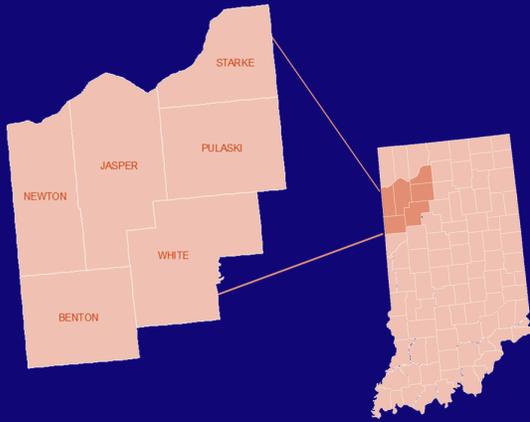


KIRPC AG REGION



AGRICULTURAL STRATEGY 2022

Rural Economic Development Model



KIRPC AG REGION

The Kankakee-Iroquois Regional Planning Commission (KIRPC) Ag Region (the 'Region') is comprised of the following six primarily rural counties in northwestern Indiana:

- BENTON COUNTY
- JASPER COUNTY
- NEWTON COUNTY
- PULASKI COUNTY
- STARKE COUNTY
- WHITE COUNTY

A Framework developed to guide communities in the development of agricultural strategies for rural regions.

Agriculture, as a leading Indiana economic sector, is shaped by world-renowned agribusiness firms, strong trade and membership organizations, productive farmers and soil, thoughtful and skilled leaders in public and private arenas, and innovative entrepreneurs. Agricultural strength is prevalent in the Region, and the Task Force's goal in implementing the REDM is to identify the ag assets (raw materials) and resources that will help leaders to develop the policies, infrastructure, sites, and support needed to create long-term improvements in their rural economies.

Self-selected regions analyze data in an effort to discover their major agricultural assets and work to attract value-added agriculture — agribusiness and food-processing facilities and their connected supply chains — that fit with the Region's capacity, vision and needs. The REDM process focuses on understanding a region's core clusters, outputs, supply chain, current policies, infrastructure, and potential sites that meet the unique needs of the targeted industries.

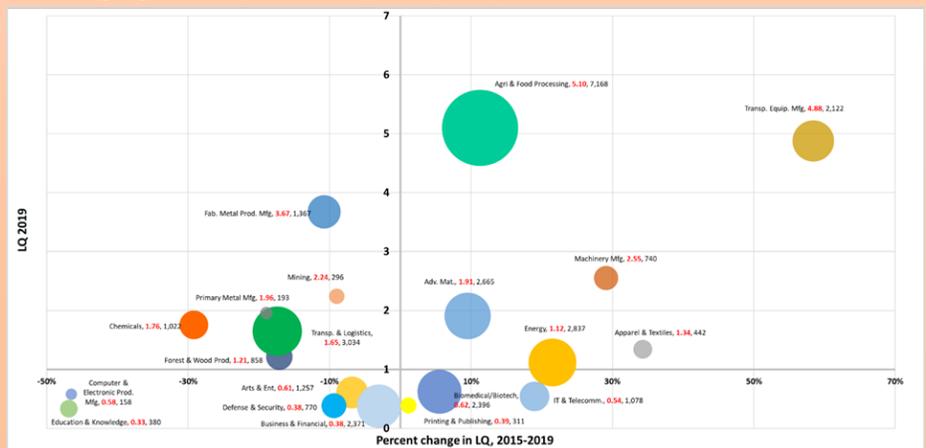
INDUSTRY CLUSTER ANALYSIS

Industry Cluster Analysis and Location Quotients were employed to determine the economic competitiveness of the region.

COMPETITIVE CLUSTER

The Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology cluster emerged as a competitive cluster in the Region, suggesting that the project aligns with regional strengths and opportunities. The Region's agribusiness cluster is a competitive cluster that is growing and is more concentrated in the Region as compared to the U.S.

KIRPC Ag Region Industry Cluster Analysis (2015—2019)



REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS

Local producers are interested in building a regional food system that will allow them to connect more efficiently with consumers.

FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

Significant gaps were identified in the meat processing sector, access to cold storage facilities, technical expertise support for entrepreneurs, and lack of facilities for producing small batches of new products.

AG WORKFORCE

There is high demand for CDL drivers, regional meat processing, qualified meat cutters, and access to farm labor in the region.

REGULATORY STREAMLINING

Zoning and permitting processes are often difficult to navigate. The Region is focusing on a coordinated approach to the process, in addition to promoting a Right-to-Farm policy in all six counties.



KIRPC REGION AG STRATEGY

Analysis of current data and trends within the existing businesses was key to selecting prime targets for the KIRPC Ag Region. The regional team interviewed existing businesses to identify key “barometers” of the clusters’ economic health. The process was intentionally focused on identifying gaps in the supply chain and regional leakages for the purpose of understanding and proactively responding to the threats limiting growth and, sometimes, even survival in today’s economic climate.

Through the data analysis and company interviews, the Task Force identified four key strategies:

- regional food systems,
- food supply chain,
- ag workforce, and

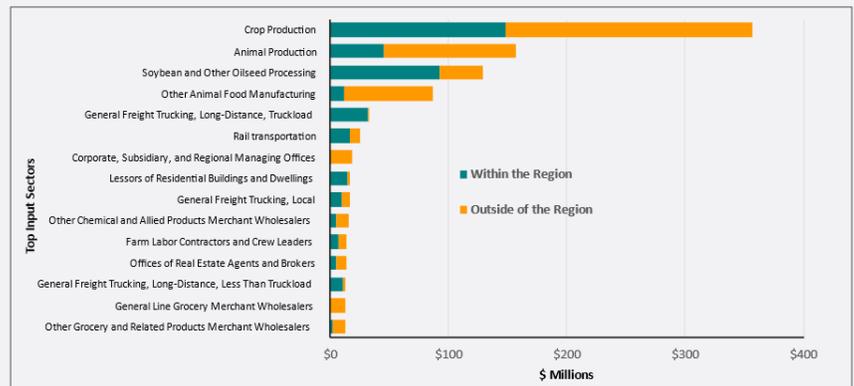
ECONOMIC LEAKAGE ANALYSIS

An analysis of economic leakages revealed the potential for expansion and development within the Region to provide a closer source for supplies and raw materials.



Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology

Leakage analysis 2019: KIRPC



REGIONAL TEAM MEMBERS

Benton County

Angela Taylor, Director
Benton County Economic Development

Jasper County

Stephen Eastridge, Executive Director
Jasper County Economic Development Organization

Newton County

Tim Myers, Director
Newton County Economic Development

Pulaski County

Nathan P. Origer, Executive Director
Pulaski County Community Development Commission

Starke County

Lisa Dan, Director & Mary Perren, Assistant
Starke County Economic Development Foundation

White County

Andrew Westfall,
County Extension Director – Ag/Natural Resources
Purdue Cooperative Extension – White County



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grant Award

The Kankakee-Iroquois Regional Planning Commission received funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration's Economic Adjustment Assistance Program to assist the counties of Benton, Jasper, Newton, Pulaski, Starke, and White in developing the KIRPC Regional Agricultural Strategy.

Local Match

The economic development offices in the counties of Benton, Jasper, Newton, Pulaski, Starke, and White provided the local match required by the grant.