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2026 Springboard Challenge Conference Agenda

March 4 – 5 | Illinois Soybean Association | Bloomington, Illinois

MARCH 4

- 1:00 – 1:10 p.m. Welcome by John Lumpe, CEO, Illinois Soybean Association
- 1:10 – 1:30 p.m. The Vision of the Illinois Soybean Innovation Center
- Todd Main, Director of Market Development, Illinois Soybean Association
 - Steve Pitstick, Illinois Soybean Association Board Director
- 1:30 – 2:45 p.m. Strength Through Collaboration: Universities as the Crucible of Innovation
- Dr. Lisa Freeman, President, Northern Illinois University
 - Responding Panel
- 2:45 – 3:15 p.m. Break
- 3:15 – 4:15 p.m. Panel – The Innovation Ecosystem: Connecting the Dots of Opportunity, R&D, Commercialization, and a Favorable Business Climate
- 4:15 – 5:15 p.m. Innovation in Practice: 2025 Springboard Challenge Awardees and Innovators
- 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. Networking Reception
- 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Dinner – Featured Conference Speaker: Innovation in the Heartland
- Location TBA

MARCH 5

- 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Networking Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 – 9:30 a.m. Diversifying Illinois Agricultural Markets (invited)
- Jerry Costello, Director, Illinois Department of Agriculture
- 9:45 – 10:00 a.m. Break
- 10:00 – 10:45 a.m. Panel: The Path to Commercialization
- 10:45 – 11:15 a.m. 2026 SpringBoard Challenges – The Five Challenge Areas
- Todd Main
- 11:15 – 11:45 a.m. 2026 SpringBoard Rules and Procedures, Q&A

