



Executive Summary:

Building Nebraska's Bioeconomy: Key Findings and Strategic Path Forward

In early 2026, Bio Nebraska commissioned an assessment to answer a simple question: **Does Nebraska need an industrial biomanufacturing pilot facility?** The research ultimately revealed a broader opportunity.

Key Findings

Nebraska does not currently need a general industrial biomanufacturing pilot facility.

While Nebraska companies have used pilot facilities outside the state, existing national capacity is currently underutilized and additional facilities are coming online. Building a new statewide facility today would carry significant financial and utilization risk.

A biologicals-focused pilot facility merits further study. Nebraska possesses many of the assets needed to support a biologicals pilot facility, including established biopharmaceutical and animal health companies, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's (UNL) Biological Process Development Facility, the presence of the National Strategic Research Institute, and demonstrated industry demand. While this is not a recommendation to move forward, it represents a promising opportunity to study.

Higher-impact opportunities exist today. The study identified several actions that could generate greater returns than constructing a new facility, including:

- Developing a statewide industrial biotechnology strategy
- Expanding partnerships with major industry employers, such as ADM, Cargill, and Green Plains
- Re-engaging UNL's Industrial Agricultural Products Center
- Building relationships with existing pilot facilities to attract companies to Nebraska
- Strengthening workforce development
- Exploring Opportunity Zone designations for biomanufacturing development

These initiatives require significantly less capital while creating a stronger foundation for long-term industry growth.

Nebraska has competitive advantages to build upon. Compared with neighboring Midwestern states, Nebraska's agricultural resources, renewable energy potential, and existing industry assets position it well for future bioeconomy growth. Additional work is needed to better understand university commercialization opportunities and evaluate tax and incentive policies that will help Nebraska compete for future investment.



The Path Forward

Rather than beginning with a major capital investment, the next phase should focus on validating demand, strengthening Nebraska's competitive advantages, and developing a coordinated statewide strategy that positions the state for long-term leadership in the bioeconomy. This assessment should be viewed as a starting point, not a feasibility study or business plan.

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