



“We have something here that you don’t find just anywhere in the country.”

Longtime docent Eugene Muhlenkamp was talking about Woodland’s California Agriculture Museum, but he could have easily been describing Woodland’s entire food and agriculture industry cluster, a group of over 190 businesses we call “The Food Front.”

Telling Woodland’s food and ag story would take far more than one news item, but in many ways the Ag Museum, The Lab@AgStart in Downtown Woodland, and the future Woodland Research and Technology Park – three facilities within three miles of each other – sum up our community’s rich agricultural legacy and why Woodland is the perfect home for FIRA USA 2024.

Woodland has shaped the future of food and agriculture for over a century by fostering a culture of innovation while respecting how we got here. The California Agriculture Museum and its Heidrick Collection may be the single best and most diverse array of agricultural artifacts in the United States. While the museum honors the past, the heart of the collection’s story is about innovation and shaping the future. “The early 1900s - when you take a look at those designs, you wonder, how did they make some of that stuff?” Muhlenkamp shakes his head and adds, “It’s amazing, the ingenuity they put into it.”

The same spirit of ingenuity practically bounces off the walls of The Lab@AgStart, a facility fostering the next generation of food, ag, and health innovation. Although mechanical improvements like those on display at the Ag Museum and here at FIRA USA continue to change how we grow and eat our food, many of tomorrow’s solutions require state-of-the-art lab space to test ideas and bring them to market. When it opened its doors in May 2021, The Lab@AgStart roughly doubled the amount of lab space available to startup companies in our

Northern California region. What's more, the Lab is the largest facility of its kind in Northern California and features a shared wet lab, certified commercial kitchen, co-working space, fermentation lab, tissue culture lab, an event center, and more.

“This unique facility offers entrepreneurial companies commercializing ag, food, and health technology innovations access to complete facilities,” says AgStart President John Selep. The Lab provides a place for entrepreneurs, including those emerging from UC Davis, to cultivate innovations. In fact, the facility has already attracted more than \$60 million in private capital investment.

While the Lab will help solve pressing issues in our food and ag system, California and the world require larger scale resources to solve pressing issues in food, ag, and human and animal health. Our unmatched industry cluster of over 190 food and ag businesses, proximity to UC Davis, ideal climate, and the Greater Sacramento area's unique mix of every facet of the food economy have helped fuel the Woodland Research and Technology Park project, a fully-entitled 350-acre mixed-use development that will feature 2 million square feet of research, lab, and office space and 1,600 housing units just a mile and a half from the FIRA USA 2024 event. “This project will help Woodland and the entire region capitalize on our strong local industry, innovation community, and talent pool,” says City of Woodland Communication and Strategic Policies Manager Spencer Bowen. “It will be ideally positioned to provide the type of space and opportunity to tackle the world's most pressing problems in food, ag, and health, located just 7 miles from UC Davis, 12 miles from Sacramento Airport, 50 miles from Napa and California wine country, 80 miles from San Francisco, and 130 miles from Silicon Valley.”

Woodland has shaped the future of food and agriculture for over a century, driven by natural resources few places can match and celebrated by facilities like the California Ag Museum. But we don't just rely on our ideal location. With a culture rooted in innovation and actively investing in forward-thinking projects like The Lab@AgStart and the forthcoming Research and Technology Park, Woodland is constantly growing and improving, making sure we continue to lead the way for food and agricultural innovation and responsibility.