

IMPACT INSIGHTS

At a Glance

- **StartupBREW Fargo:** 3 events featuring AI, digital agriculture, artisan creators, and a speaker reunion, continuing to anchor weekly entrepreneurial engagement.
- **State Investment:** \$7M ND Department of Commerce Autonomous Ag Grant awarded to support infrastructure, autonomy testing, and workforce development.
- **USDA ARS Engagement Strengthened**
The Senate passed the FY2026 Agriculture Appropriations Bill, which includes funding to support the AgTech Cooperative Agreement between Grand Farm, North Dakota State University, and USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS). This federal investment advances plans to establish an ARS work site at the Grand Farm Innovation Campus, strengthening long-term research collaboration and solidifying USDA ARS engagement in North Dakota's AgTech ecosystem.
- **R&D Progress:** Completion of the 2025 field season; drone imagery, sensor transitions, data integration, and multi-state research planning advanced significantly.
- **Ecosystem Growth:** Engagement with Houser Labs, BioSTL, and Applied Digital expanded the region's innovation and commercialization footprint into biotech, CEA, and high-performance compute.
- **National Visibility:** Forbes feature ("Old MacDonald Had A Farm (A.I....A.I.? Oh!)" and additional coverage across Brookings, American Ag Network, DigiKey, and KX News elevated national recognition of Grand Farm and Emerging Prairie.

Driving Engagement Across Sectors

November deepened regional connectivity, expanded international engagement, and strengthened the ecosystem's multi-sector innovation capacity.

- **Grand Farm Facility Rentals & Site Hosting**

The Innovation Campus continued to serve as a neutral convening space for partners across industry, government, education, and startups.

- November Facility Usage:
 - 3 facility rentals - These engagements supported small-group collaboration, technical discussions, and partner alignment.

- **International Engagement**

Collaboration with the Canadian Consulate and Japanese Consul General expanded opportunities for cross-border field trials, knowledge exchange, and investment exploration.



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- **Participation in AgTech Nation**

Grand Farm's presentation on the 2026 Startup Plots elevated national recognition of North Dakota as a premier test environment for startup-focused agricultural innovation.

- **Award of \$7M ND Department of Commerce Grant**

State investment in autonomous agriculture infrastructure reinforced North Dakota's leadership in autonomy, workforce development, and rural innovation.

- **USDA ARS Engagement Strengthened**

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- **Biotech Incubator Engagement (Houser Labs)**

Support for a regional biotech incubator expanded innovation capacity into biologicals, molecular ag, and biomanufacturing.

- **RAPPR (Regional Ag Pain Point Report) Planning**

Work began on the updated RAPPR, integrating statewide agricultural data visualization into regional priority setting.

- **Statewide Agricultural Data Visualization Initiatives**

Visualization strengthened regional understanding of producer challenges, opportunities, and innovation gaps.

Ecosystem Activation Through Emerging Prairie

Emerging Prairie continued to drive entrepreneurial momentum throughout November, activating founders, creatives, technologists, and agriculture innovators through consistent weekly programming.

- **StartupBREW Fargo (3 events / 312 attendees):**

A strong cross-sector lineup featuring AI founders, digital agriculture innovators, artisan makers, and a capstone community celebration:

- **Chipp AI + Salt Hill Jewelry** – AI-driven innovation paired with creative maker entrepreneurship.
- **Immersion + Digital Plains** – Digital agriculture technology and data-enabled business solutions.

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- **StartupBREW Speaker Reunion Day** – A celebration of founder stories, returning speakers, and the community built throughout the year.

StartupBREW Fargo 2025 Season Summary

This year, StartupBREW celebrated another incredible season of storytelling and connection, bringing together entrepreneurs, innovators, and community members week after week.

Across the full year, StartupBREW delivered:

- 72 speakers
- 17 performers
- 3,775 cups of coffee served
- 3,816 total attendees
- 45 meetups
- Average weekly attendance of 100 people



Each event continued to showcase the entrepreneurial spirit and creativity fueling Fargo's startup ecosystem and further strengthened Emerging Prairie's role as a regional engine for community-building and innovation.

Advancing Applied Research and Field Trials

- **Data Report & Analysis Planning**
Multi-state dataset synthesis advanced significantly, supporting integrated insights for growers, startups, and industry partners.
- **Completion of the 2025 Field Season**
Sampling and yield consolidation completed across partner sites; datasets now ready for winter analysis.
- **Drone Imagery & Digital Agronomy Development**
Flights advanced stress detection, autonomous scouting, and yield estimation tools.
- **USDA ARS Site Coordination**
Sensor retrieval and winter transitions maintained strong alignment with ARS research workflows.
- **2026 Season Research Strategy Development**
Planning advanced with ND Corn Council, ND Soybean Council, Northern Crops Institute, UGA, and Texas A&M to define multi-crop research priorities.
- **Autonomy & UAS Strategy Planning**
Internal development refined long-term strategy for autonomous systems and unmanned aircraft R&D across test sites.

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Old MacDonald Had A Farm (A.I.... A.I.? Oh!)

By Matthew Chaussee, Contributor. © Matthew Chaussee advances... [Follow Author](#)

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Innovation has always thrived in agriculture; now a Grand Farm in North Dakota is cultivating education around the autonomous, A.I.-enabled systems that will feed the world



- **Engagement with BioSTL**
Strengthened access to national bioscience commercialization networks and adjacent innovation pathways.
- **2026 Startup Plot Program Development**
Refinements strengthened Grand Farm's core mechanism for transitioning early-stage technologies toward commercial readiness.
- **National AgTech Network Engagement**
Active promotion increased visibility among founders, corporates, and accelerators preparing for 2026 participation.
- **University Engagement**
Partnerships with UGA, NDSU, and Texas A&M expanded experiential learning, collaborative research, and student-to-industry connections.
- **Media Engagement & Public Storytelling**
National stories, including Forbes, translated technical and ecosystem activity into accessible narratives for policymakers, growers, and funders.

In Summary

November demonstrated meaningful ecosystem expansion, scientific progress, commercialization readiness, and workforce momentum. Grand Farm and Emerging Prairie continue positioning North Dakota as a national leader in agricultural innovation, autonomy, and rural prosperity - reinforcing the case for continued investment and multi-sector collaboration.