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First Mid Ag Services Highlights Continued Growth in Professional Farm Management

New industry survey shows professionally managed Illinois farmland has increased 156% since 2016, with continued growth expected over the next decade

Bloomington, IL (September 28, 2026) A new industry survey shows significant growth in professional farm management across Illinois, a trend First Mid Ag Services says reflects the increasingly complex needs of farmland owners and the value of professional guidance in managing agricultural assets.

The 2026 industry survey conducted by the Illinois Society of Professional Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers (ISPFMRA) found that its members manage more than 2.7 million acres of Illinois farmland, representing more than 11% of the state's approximately 24 million agricultural acres. That marks a 156% increase in ISPFMRA-managed acreage since the survey was last conducted in 2016.

The survey also points to continued growth in the profession. Respondents forecast a 24.6% increase in total acres under professional management over the next 10 years and an average increase of 39.2% in landowner clients during the same period.

“Farmland ownership continues to evolve, and many landowners today are increasingly removed from the day-to-day operation of the farm,” said Michael Lauher, Farm Manager with First Mid Ag Services and immediate past president of ISPFMRA. “At the same time, production agriculture has become more technical, expensive, and complex. Professional farm management helps bridge that gap by bringing together industry expertise and an understanding of each landowner's individual goals.”

First Mid Ag Services manages more than 288,000 acres of farmland, representing over 10% of the professionally managed acres reported in the ISPFMRA survey. 22 First Mid Farm Managers are members of ISPFMRA, and 14 hold the Accredited Farm Manager (AFM) designation through the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers (ASFMRA).

The AFM designation recognizes professionals who meet specific experience requirements and complete a rigorous education program designed to enhance their knowledge and skills in land management and production agriculture. Through their involvement with ISPFMRA, First Mid Farm Managers also participate in continuing education and remain closely connected to changing market conditions, agricultural practices, and industry trends.

“Every farm and every landowner are different, which is why professional farm management is about much more than overseeing acres,” said Lauher. “Our role is to understand what an owner wants to accomplish with the land and use our knowledge of agriculture, leasing, markets, and long-term stewardship to help them make informed decisions.”

The survey also highlights the importance of professional appraisal services. ISPFMRA member companies reported completing 1,717 appraisals in 2025 with a combined valuation of \$6.43 billion. Farmland represented the primary property category appraised. First Mid Ag Services’ team includes one licensed certified general real estate appraiser and two associate real estate trainee appraisers.

First Mid Ag Services also plays an active role in ISPFMRA's annual Illinois Farmland Values and Lease Trends Report, which provides insight into farmland values and leasing trends statewide and across 10 regions of Illinois. Nine First Mid Farm Managers contribute to the report, representing seven regions across the state. That broad participation gives the team insight into both statewide agricultural trends and conditions within individual markets.

As farmland ownership continues to change across generations, First Mid Ag Services believes the survey results demonstrate the growing role professional farm managers can play in helping owners protect, manage, and plan for the future of their agricultural assets.

To learn more about First Mid Ag Services and its farm management, farmland appraisal, and agricultural real estate services, visit www.firstmidag.com.

About First Mid Ag Services: First Mid Ag Services manages, brokers, and values Midwest farmland and provides agricultural consultation services, primarily in Illinois and surrounding states. With seven regional offices in Bloomington (Principal Real Estate Office), Decatur, Kankakee, Mattoon, Peoria, Princeton, and Springfield, the team includes 27 farm managers/Illinois licensed real estate brokers who combine their unique skill sets to represent the absentee farmland owners they serve. First Mid Ag Services is a division of First Mid Wealth Management Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of First Mid Bancshares, Inc.

About First Mid Bancshares, Inc.: First Mid Bancshares, Inc. is the parent company of First Mid Bank & Trust, N.A., First Mid Insurance Group, and First Mid Wealth Management Company. First Mid is a \$9.2 billion community-focused organization that provides financial services including banking, insurance, wealth management, brokerage, and ag services through a network of locations in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Texas, and Wisconsin, and a loan production office in Indiana. Together, our First Mid team takes great pride in providing solutions and services to our customers and communities and has done so since 1865. More information about the Company is available on our website at www.firstmid.com. Our stock is traded in The NASDAQ Stock Market LLC under the ticker symbol “FMBH”. Member FDIC | Equal Housing Lender.

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About ISPFMRA: Founded in 1928, the Illinois Society of Professional Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers is the oldest and largest state organization of its kind in the United States and one of 37 chapters of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers. The organization supports professional education, industry standards, and continuing development for farm managers, rural appraisers, and agricultural consultants.