

# Annual Agriculture Industry Day Set For April 17

**CARBONDALE, ILL.**

Expect to see U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack at Southern Illinois University Carbondale's Agriculture Industry Day, set for Friday, April 17, at the University Farm's Rowden Road complex.

"At this point, we'd have to say he's been invited to be our keynote speaker (confirmation has not yet arrived), but we've let him know that his new boss was our first speaker," said Gary L. Minish, dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences, which sponsors the annual event.

It's been five years since then-Sen. Barack Obama addressed the 700 people who showed up on a blustery Saturday morning to see what that first Ag Industry Day at SIUC was all about. Held each year since, the event has changed a bit, moving to Friday and adding programs aimed at young people to draw in more prospective students. But the mission remains the same.

"We want to showcase the college's teaching, research and outreach programs – that's still the focus," Minish said.

Last year, largely because of added youth-oriented programs, Minish believes, attendance doubled.

"But it's also become a tradition out in the state," he noted.

"People want to know when it is so they can

put it on their calendars. We don't have to advertise as much to get a large crowd."

As it did last year, the day begins at 8:30 a.m. with FFA judging contests. The morning program will include an update on Saluki football by head coach Dale Lennon, a presentation by Marion senior Todd L. Marlo on what it's like to be an SIUC student as well as a talk by alumnus G. David Delaney, president of PCS Sales for Potash Corp., on why SIUC was the right choice for him. Vilsack will speak on the role agriculture, food and natural resources can play in helping the nation recover from recession.

The afternoon program, to run from 1 to 3, will offer a demonstration of horsemanship skills put on by local "horse whisperer" and college graduate student Mark Schwarm; tips on landscape design and care plus weekend project ideas; nutrition information; crack lumberjack crews in action; and tastings of award-winning regional wines.

In between, the college will serve up helpings of its famous – and free – barbecue, courtesy of the state's beef and pork producers.

"It's a fun day, there's something for everyone, and there's plenty to eat," Minish said with a smile.

"We put on our brochure, 'Come. Learn. Eat. Visit. Enjoy.' And that's exactly what it is." Δ



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